

LILITH

THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE #16 \$3.50 SPRING 1987/5747

WOMEN WHO FOUGHT THE NAZIS



04345 36
9340 THE OLD UNION-LIB SERIALS
3400 KENYON ROAD
DALLAS, TEXAS 75245
947709

SEXISM UNDER APARTHEID
CAN FEMINISTS LAUGH AT JOAN RIVERS' SHTIK?

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY



Photo: John Polak

Deborah Kruger's mixed-media installation "Tribe of Dina," exhibited recently in a solo show in New York City, retells the Biblical story of Dina, who is raped on her way to a women's gathering in the desert.

In the original version, the incident of the rape is overshadowed by the bloodshed that follows. Dina's brothers, in revenge, first circumcize and then slay all the men of the attacker's tribe. "I am attempting to reframe this story from a woman's perspective, since this is what is missing from Biblical commentary," says Kruger, who claims that the original "is less a story about Dina than a tale of male violence."

These eighteen fiber-and-plaster female torsos, suspended over a bed of sand, center the story on the women's group Dina had set out to meet. The artist describes the scene: "The battered and assaulted Dina has found her way to (or been discovered by) her tribe. She lies before the approaching tribe, who come offering protection and healing." And she adds, "Then, as now, women's groups can be seen as threatening to men."

Kruger, who lives in Montague, Massachusetts, has named her year-old daughter Aviva Lilith.

9 FAMILIAR CRUELITIES: A NIGHTMARE JOURNEY THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA

by Mira Hamermesh

Researching her film "Maids and Madams," a study of Black women and their white employers in South Africa, a Holocaust survivor has a personal encounter with apartheid, and tells here how its racism is inextricably linked with an equally corrosive but less frequently documented sexism. The cruelties of both are jarringly familiar to Hamermesh, resonating with her childhood memories of Nazi persecution.

16 FREE IDA NUDEL!

LILITH launches a Women's Appeal to Raissa Gorbachev for the release of long-time refusenik and human rights activist Ida Nudel, isolated in the town of Bendery, Moldavia after four brutal years of Siberian exile.

18 COMEDY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Can We Laugh at Joan Rivers?

by Celia Weisman

Can thinking women find anything to identify with in the persona of the abrasive late-night comic with the misogynist barbs?

Funny, and Feminist Too

by Judy Rosenberg

Two Jewish comedienues use humor to fight stereotypes—and still get laughs.

20 SHE FOUGHT BACK—AN INTERVIEW WITH VILNA PARTISAN VITKE KEMPNER

by Aviva Cantor

The woman who carried out the first known act of Jewish sabotage against the Nazis talks with LILITH about what it was like to be a woman in the Resistance in the ghetto and forest, her relationships with male and female comrades, and the special role women took in the movement.

25 LIFTING THE YOKE—IS THERE HOPE FOR ENDING JEWISH LEGAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN?

by Gila Berkowitz

Thousands of women came to Jerusalem in December to express their views on how the Jewish legal system oppresses them, and to call for action. But were the male rabbis, who have the power to change things, really listening?

27 THE RITUAL IMPULSE

by Tikva Frymer-Kensky

A review of Penina Adelman's *Miriam's Well*, a collection of new rituals for Jewish women, looks at the directions these ceremonies are taking us.

LILITH

NUMBER 16

SPRING 1987/5747

THE PREPARED TABLE*

2 FROM THE EDITORS

3 LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Letters from LILITH readers.

4 KOL ISHAH

An update on feminist efforts in Israel, a report on a Jewish women's exhibit in Amsterdam, news about the decision to certify Conservative women cantors, and other activities by and for Jewish women worldwide.

15 POETRY

28 TSENA-RENA

New resources for Jewish women—projects, events, films, and more.

32 BIMA

Tziporah BenAvraham uses LILITH's "platform" to tell us what disabled Jewish women really need.

THE COVER: Jewish women partisans from Vilna fought alongside men in the anti-Nazi resistance in the forests. Photographed on their return to Vilna on Liberation Day, 1944, are (L. to R.): Vitke Kempner, Rushka Korczak, and Zelda Trager. (Photo courtesy Cieśla Found.)
Cover Design: Barbara Taff

THE PREPARED TABLE (The *Shulchan Aruch*) is the authoritative code of Jewish behavior according to *halacha* (law). As Jewish feminists continue to rediscover and rework Jewish practice, the contents of LILITH may serve as an evolving Prepared Table for a new code of behavior.

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam. "After the Holy one created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith,'" Adam said. "You are fit to be beside me and I love you," Lilith said. "We are equal because we both come from the earth." (From the Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b).

LILITH is published by Lilith Publications, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Subscriptions are \$14 for 4 issues for individuals, \$16 for institutions and libraries. Individual copies \$4.00 prepaid. Outside the United States add \$4 per subscription. Copyright © Lilith Publications, Inc., 1987. All rights reserved under international and Pan American Conventions. Editorial Office: 250 W. 57 St., New York, N.Y. 10019, ISSN No. 0146-2334. Lilith No. 16, Spring 1987.

LILITH welcomes articles, fiction, poetry, biography, drama, children's stories, criticism, photos and original art work. Please include one-sentence biographical identification, address and phone number. Manuscripts must be typed, doubled spaced, on one side of the page. Complete guidelines are available on request; enclose SASE. For acknowledgement of receipt, please enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard. For return of manuscripts, enclose an SASE. LILITH Publications, Inc., 250 West 57 St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

FROM THE EDITORS

After years of exile in Siberia, Soviet Jewish human rights activist Ida Nudel still struggles to leave the Soviet Union for Israel.

LILITH launches in this issue a Women's Appeal to Raissa Gorbachev, wife of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, to allow Nudel, who has been applying unsuccessfully for an exit visa since 1971, to rejoin her sister in Israel.

Nudel, 55, an economist-engineer by profession, was sentenced in 1978 to four years' "internal exile" in Siberia for hanging a banner from her balcony reading, "KGB, give me my visa for Israel." Housed for most of this time in a barracks with male criminals, Nudel survived her exile (chronicled in issue #10), and tried to return to her Moscow home in March 1982.

Although she had the legal right to live and be registered there—or anywhere else in the country she chose—Nudel was barred from Moscow and given 72 hours to leave. She spent the next six months wandering from city to city, trying in vain to find a place she could be registered. She felt, she later told *Jerusalem Post* reporter Louis Rapoport, "like a hunted animal."

She was finally allowed to live in Bendery, a town of 100,000 about 120 miles north of the Black Sea. She lives with her collie dog in a peasant hut of two small rooms, and works in her garden growing vegetables and tending fruit trees. It took her two years to get cold water piped in and electricity installed—and to recover physically from the stresses of Siberia and the six months' homelessness (she still suffers from heart disease).

Known as the "Angel of the Refuseniks," Nudel continues to do what she did before her Siberian exile: to write and send packages to Prisoners of Conscience. After the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, she gave shelter in her home to five children—Jews and non-Jews—evacuated from Kiev.

Prevented from traveling outside Bendery, she told Rapoport, "I don't live in the Soviet Union in my spirit. I wish the Russian people well, but I want all Jews to understand: it was our fate before to live here...but now we have a country of our own at last" and she wants to go there, to Israel.

The recent Soviet "glasnost" (openness) policy has created a situation where the authorities may be more responsive to an appeal for Nudel's release on humanitarian grounds.

We hope this new approach of a

Women's Appeal will play an important role in moving the Soviets to issue Nudel an exit visa. We are calling on all women and women's organizations to join the Appeal. (Please see page 16.) LILITH will present all the signatures to the Soviet authorities publicly and with media attention.

Like released Prisoner of Conscience Anatoly (Natan) Sharansky, Nudel was deeply involved with the Helsinki Watch Group, whose leaders were imprisoned in 1978, the same year Nudel and Sharansky were sentenced.

"Sharansky was absolutely right," she told the *Post*, "when he stressed the connection between the Jewish movement and the dissident movement..."

If oppressed Jews in the Soviet Union take great risks to speak out on human rights, how much more imperative is it for those of us living in freedom to add our voices to theirs.

We must not commit the crime of silence—of being bystanders when others are being persecuted—neither in the Nudel case, nor in the case of South

Africa, where Blacks have for so long been denied the most basic human rights, as we see in the article on page 9.

Filmmaker Mira Hamermesh, who survived the Holocaust by fleeing Nazi-occupied Lodz for Palestine, sees apartheid through the prism of the Holocaust. Probing South African reality to research "Maids and Madams," her film on the links between racism and sexism, she sees—and experiences—how white women benefit from white-skin privilege and cannot help but take

advantage of their Black maids' powerlessness. Repeatedly she asks herself, "Am I my sister's keeper?"

For Jews who feel the pain and rage at having been abandoned (with a few shining exceptions) by the non-Jewish world at a time of their greatest Catastrophe and greatest need there can be one and only one answer to that question.□

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER

EDITOR

AVIVA CANTOR

BUSINESS MANAGER

PAULA GANTZ

NEWS EDITOR

REENA SIGMAN FRIEDMAN

FICTION EDITOR

JULIA WOLF MAZOW

POETRY EDITOR

BONNIE ANKER

ART DIRECTOR

RITA HALL

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

ELIZABETH LICHTENSTEIN

STUDENT INTERN

ELIZABETH ROTTENBERG

ADVISORY BOARD

RACHEL ADLER, ARLENE AGUS, BATYA BAUMAN, ESTHER BRONER, NINA CARDIN, ELAINE COHEN, ANNETTE DAUM, SUSAN DESSEL, SUE ELWELL, ELIE FAUST-LEVY, IRENE FINE, EVA FOGELMAN, SHIRLEY FRANK, DORIS B. GOLD, BLU GREENBERG, JUDITH HAUPTMAN, PAULA HYMAN, BARBARA JOANS, BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT, ANNE LAPIDUS LERNER, SHARON LIEBERMAN, AUDREY FRIEDMAN MARCUS, RELA GEFFEN MONSON, ANITA NORICH, JUDITH PLASKOW, NESSA RAPOPORT, ROCHELLE SAIDEL, SANDY E. SASSO, MARY CAHN SCHWARTZ, SHARON STRASSFELD, DOREEN SEIDLER-FELLER, IDA COHEN SELAVAN, ELAINE STARKMAN, AMY STONE, SHEBAR WINDSTONE, ANN C. WOLFE, SHEVA ZUCKER

LILITH thanks the following for their assistance:

AMERICANS FOR PROGRESSIVE ISRAEL-HASHOMER HATZAIR, SUSAN BIRNBAUM, JOYCE ROSMAN BRENNER, RICHARD COHEN, MERRILL GOLDENBERG, JOYCE KAPLAN, HERBERT LUFT, CAMPBELL MCGRATH, CANDACE MOORE, NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, GLENN RICHTER, LILLY RIVLIN, LINDA RUBIN, LYNN SINGER, TECHEN NEW YORK AND TEL AVIV, KIBBUTZ ARTZI, BOB WADE—AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, KIM WOLF

LINE OF COMMUNICATION

Rape Findings Skewed?

Dear LILITH:

I found myself feeling very uncomfortable with the conclusions in the article on "Why Jewish Women Get Raped" (Interview with Pauline Bart, #15). Here was yet another suggestion that a woman is a victim and a Jew is a victim as a result of an ethnically determined inability to react physically to imminent danger.

I think it's stretching an analogy to compare the Holocaust to rape-avoidance strategies.

And to make sweeping generalizations about the unique vulnerability of Jewish women based on approximately one-fifth (18) of an already small sample of women (94) seems manipulative—as if the need to present an article with a "Jewish" slant was more pressing than a general article on Bart's findings on rape.

My own experience as a Jewish female raised in the suburbs for over 20 years then living alone in a large city for another 15 leads me to suspect that "street smarts" is an essential issue, one which has less to do with ethnic background and everything to do with social class. A woman (Jewish or not) raised in the comfort and safety of a socially homogeneous community learns no violence-avoidance strategies until or unless she is later exposed to an environment demanding them. Of the 18 Jewish women Bart interviewed, how many of them actually were raised in a heterogeneous community (that is, in an urban setting) as compared to the non-Jewish group?

I have to think that both "natal" community and the social conventions of being raised a proper middle-class girl certainly shape responses to danger more than ethnic content. Perhaps the 18 Jewish women in Bart's studied group all shared these demographics, perhaps Jews share these conditions disproportionately. Perhaps the article should have been titled "Why (These 18) Jewish Women Got Raped."

Sharon Lieberman
Evanston IL

Dear LILITH:

Thank you so much for your article on "Jewish Women & Rape." I consider myself a strong feminist and hoped I was raising my daughter to be the same. She is very verbal and articulate, but when she was raped last summer, age 14, she seemed strangely passive.

But after reading your article, lightning bolts began exploding for both of us. So thank you very much for

helping us work through a horrid experience with a lot more understanding.

(name withheld)
Seattle WA

Pauline Bart Responds:

I am pleased that Ms. Lieberman took the time to write her questions. I, too, thought that social class would be an important variable and measured it using father's, mothers', husband's (if relevant) and own occupation and education. The only variable that predicted rape avoidance was mother's education, which is paradoxical because it is the women with *highly* educated mothers who are most likely to avoid rape when attacked. Seven out of the eight women with mothers with post-graduate education avoided rape and no Jewish or Black woman with a mother with a B.A. or higher was raped when attacked.

I, too, thought that street smarts would be an important variable. Unfortunately the question I asked, "When you were growing up did you live in a dangerous neighborhood?", utilized

MOVING VIOLATIONS

Gentle subscribers: If you are planning to move, please remember to inform us of your new address, enclosing the address label with your old address, if possible.

Many of you have written to us in dismay that your copies of LILITH have not magically followed you to your new abode. Please remember that the U.S. Postal Service *will not forward* magazines unless you have specifically promised to pay forwarding costs.

What happens if you don't inform us is this: You move, the magazine gets mailed to your old address, you aren't there, and the Post Office *destroys* the magazine (sometimes—rarely—sending us a clipped-off mailing label saying "moved, address unknown"). Time passes; you write to us in high dudgeon that you subscribed for four issues and only received two, etc., etc.

Please, to avert the severe decree of the Postal Service that condemns undeliverable periodicals to the trash pile, tell us your new address so that we can keep that magazine coming to you, and save you and us a lengthy correspondence.

LILITH's editors thank you for your cooperation.

to get at that variable, was invalid since there was little agreement among respondents as to what constituted danger. (For example whites considered Hyde Park dangerous and Blacks considered Hyde Park safe, presumably because their comparison points differed.) I did not ask whether they grew up in rural, suburban or urban areas, but only how long they had lived in the place where they were assaulted.

Outcome-rape or rape avoidance resulted from a combination of situational *and* background variables. Ethnicity was one of the background variables. I am certainly not speaking about biological predispositions (except insofar as tallness is associated with rape avoidance and Jewish women were less likely to be five foot seven or over).

I have always had a "Jewish slant" in my research; this was not LILITH's extrapolation. In fact, Chapter 6 is titled "Ethnicity and Rape Avoidance: Jews, White Catholics, and Blacks." I presented it at the World Congress on Women in Haifa (1985) and it resonated with the Jewish women there.

It is usually the non-Jews who are surprised because they think of Jewish women as "aggressive." I point out that physical aggressiveness is not valued or encouraged in Jewish homes, and it is this type of "aggression" that is effective in rape avoidance. In my study Jewish women were much less likely to have had parents who told them to fight back when they were in physical fights than were women in other ethnic groups, particularly Black women.

Furthermore, a reading of the cases of Jewish women shows an apparent qualitative difference between Jewish women and other women, and some Jewish women themselves speak of their need to be nice and helpful, qualities which may sound good in the abstract but are dangerous in the world we now live in.

Ms. Lieberman is correct of course in pointing out the limited nature of my sample. However Diana Russell, in *Sexual Exploitation*, drawing on a much larger randomly drawn sample of San Francisco households, also found that Jewish women were disproportionately likely to be sexually assaulted. She did not distinguish between rape and attempted rape.

Because of sample size I could not control for all the possible variables simultaneously; but I felt obligated to present this data so that Jewish women would, if they so desired, change the socialization of their girls and take self-defense themselves. I was chagrined when I learned that the rabbi in the city I

Continued on page 31

Women in Israel

By Reena Sigman Friedman

In the summer of 1986, Israel was the site of, among other things, the following events:

- a special Knesset session on the problems faced by Israeli women at the hands of the state's rabbinical courts.
- a conference held in Jerusalem for educators concerned with developing nonsexist curricula for Israeli schools.
- an international women's music festival held in Beersheba.

These events are representative of a new momentum evident in the struggle for women's equality in Israel. After years of long and persistent effort on the part of a small number of indefatigable activists, the issue is now very much in the public eye, and there are signs of slow but certain progress on a number of fronts. All sectors of Israeli society—political and religious life, education, academia, the arts—have been touched by the new activist spirit.

Women vs. the Rabbinical Courts

The dramatic and emotional special Knesset session in July 1986 aimed to educate the public regarding the issue and to urge members of Knesset to take a hand in ameliorating the plight of countless *agunot* (women whose husbands have either disappeared or refused to grant them a *get*, a bill of divorce, leaving them unable to remarry under Jewish law). In an unprecedented show of unity, all ten women Knesset Members signed the letter requesting Speaker Shlomo Hillel to permit the session to be held.

Heart-rending personal testimonies were offered by many women, one of whom had been waiting for a *get* for 23 years, another for 18. The women, many of whom referred to themselves as "prisoners of the rabbinical courts," spoke bitterly of marrying off their grown children while they themselves remained *agunot*, or of their inability even to bear children because they had been kept waiting too long for a *get*.

All of the women, as well as representatives of the Organization for the Aid of *Agunot*, attested to the inefficiency of the current system and the callousness of rabbinic judges, who often tell women that the court has no solutions to offer them or urge wives to return to their husbands and "settle things between themselves."

A panel of distinguished legal experts, including law professors and practicing attorneys, most of them observant Jews committed to working within the *halachic* framework, called on members of Knesset to enact legislation designed to reform the existing system and to appoint judges sympathetic to the needs of women.

The various speakers, including Dr. Ariel Rosen-Zvi, Professor of Law at Tel Aviv University, Professor Ze'ev Falk, a member of the Law Faculty of the Hebrew University, and Dr. Michael Corninalli, an attorney, denounced the gross inefficiency of the current system, in which rabbinical judges handle extremely large case loads, and in which court proceedings and statistics on the number of cases processed are never properly recorded.

Na'amat attorney Sharon Shenhav, discussing how many women have become the victims of extortion or blackmail at the hands of their recalcitrant husbands, often condoned by the rabbinical courts, reported that in one of her recent cases, the husband demanded \$10,000 as the price of the *get*. "When I told the court that this was an outrageous demand," Shenhav said, "one of the judges suggested that the woman pay 'only \$5,000'."

Speakers called for streamlining court procedures, ending the rabbinical courts' monopoly on divorce rulings, and passing laws forcing recalcitrant husbands to grant their wives divorces, as well as separating alimony and child-support rulings from those of divorce.

Other recommendations, all feasible within the framework of *halacha*, included: the application of community pressure (such as the withholding of synagogue honors) to coerce a *get*; financial pressure (e.g., the husband could be required to pay his wife a stipulated amount each week until he agrees to give her a *get*); the intervention of the *Beit Din* (rabbinical court) to grant a special *get* even if the husband refuses to do so (there are precedents for such a practice); and imprisonment of the husband in cases where the couple have lived apart for a certain number of years and the husband has been given a warning period of one or two months to give his wife a *get*.

In response to criticisms of the present system, Rabbi Simcha Meron, former director of the Israeli rabbinical courts, accused the various speakers of "distorting the issue." He said that while there was some need for bureaucratic reform, there are "no hokus pokus

Kol Ishah—"Woman's Voice." Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

solutions" to the problems of *agunot*. Many in the audience walked out as Meron began to speak, and he was eventually booed off the podium.

Responding to Meron, Prof. Falk, a widely respected authority on marriage and divorce in Jewish law, said, "We've heard bitter complaints about this in the Knesset for years and years, and the answer always was: 'the rabbis will deal with this'.... One of the Knesset's tasks is to constantly correct itself, to look not only at the laws on the books, but at what is happening in the community at large."

The Israeli Educational System

In recent years, there have been some noteworthy developments in the struggle for sexual equality in the Israeli educational field.

For some time organizations such as Na'amat have worked for equal educational opportunities for Israeli boys and girls. For example, Na'amat launched last year a campaign to encourage Israeli high school girls to enter "high-tech" fields, a fast-growing sector of the Israeli economy.

Concern to provide Israeli boys and girls with equal educational opportunities has been echoed within the Israeli Ministry of Education itself. In July 1986, the Ministry held a landmark four-day conference for educators to analyze reasons for the educational gap between boys and girls (particularly in math, science, and technical fields) and to develop strategies to better prepare girls to meet future challenges. The conference, held in Jerusalem, was designed to train speakers to address this issue in the educational community-at-large and to begin developing a model egalitarian curriculum.

The 40 participating educators (including principals, teachers, and school counselors on the elementary and high school levels) represented all sectors of Israeli society, including the Arab population, religious and secular schools, various kibbutz movements and women's organizations.

In February, the Israeli Education Ministry banned sexism in nursery schools, instructing teachers to stop reading stories to children that depict girls as "weak, passive, or waiting for a boy to rescue them."

Ministry directives published in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper also advised preschool teachers not to tell tearful boys that they "cry like girls."

Shimshon Shoshani, director-general of the Ministry, said the new instructions were issued after it became apparent that the Israeli education system had yet to achieve sexual equality in the classroom. "Girls, in all stages of education, achieve less than boys," Shoshani said. "The reasons are educational-social, not hereditary."

The Arts

The female experience has also been reflected in the arts throughout Israel.

Several recent Israeli plays have focused on women's themes. Among these was "Bruria" (at the Pargod Theater in Jerusalem), based on the life story of the famous woman scholar and teacher mentioned in the *Talmud* (see LILITH #3).

Beersheba hosted a four-day International Women's Music Festival in June 1986 which featured performances by the Alexandra Ensemble of England; Pauline Oliveros, American accordionist and composer; Nancy Uscher, violist, and Virginia Eskin, pianist; Barbara Helsingius of Norway, guitarist; Ina Joost of Germany, cellist; and Liz Magnes of Jerusalem, pianist. In addition to the performances, the Festival included panel discussions and films on women musicians and composers.

The festival was the result of long and often difficult planning by organizer Liora Moriel and others.

Amsterdam Museum Chronicles 700 Years of Jewish Women's Experience

A compendium of Jewish law painstakingly copied by a 14th-century Dutch Jewish woman scribe...a special prayer book for Jewish women (Amsterdam, 1882)...a photo of the first woman rabbi ordained by the Conservative movement...a text of a prayer celebrating a Jewish woman's transition to middle age...an egalitarian Reform marriage contract...

All these and more are part of an exciting, multifaceted exhibit on the changing roles of Jewish women currently on display at the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam. Entitled "Sing to the Eternal One a New Song," and subtitled "Changing Tradition: The Role of Women in Judaism," the exhibit brings together historic photographs, manuscripts, legal documents and personal testimonies to chronicle women's ongoing struggle for

equality in Jewish law, ritual, education, and communal life.

Among the subjects that find expression in the exhibit are: the rediscovery of Biblical heroines and other female role models in Jewish history; the movement for equality in Jewish education; the reinterpretation of traditional Jewish women's rituals (e.g., *Rosh Chodesh*, the blessing for the new month); the rewriting of the liturgy to incorporate feminine terms and imagery; and the creation of new ceremonies celebrating various points of the female life cycle, such as birth (*brit banot*, welcoming a newborn Jewish daughter), pregnancy, childbirth, weaning, and midlife.

In recounting the story of the Jewish women's movement, the exhibit highlights the experience of Dutch Jewish women. Included is material on female Jewish scribes, publishers, and midwives of the 14th and 19th centuries; special prayer books written for, and sometimes by women; Bat Mitzvah ceremonies in Amsterdam liberal and Orthodox synagogues; Aletta Jacobs (1854-1929), the first woman physician and PhD in Holland; and Dina Samson (1868-1929), the first woman to enter the Dutch police corps, in 1911.

Also, the Council of Jewish Women, an influential organization of well-to-do Dutch Jewish women founded in the early 20th century; two contemporary Jewish women's organizations: Deborah, founded in 1978 with a predominantly Orthodox membership, and the Liberal Jewish Women's Group of The Hague; and *Kolenee*, a Jewish women's magazine founded in Holland in 1981, which has just ceased publication.

Under the direction of Jewish Historical Museum Curator Dr. Edward van Voolen, the exhibit was curated by Judith Belinfante and Judith Frishman, and coordinated by Bernadette von Woerkom, with the assistance of numerous organizations and individuals in Amsterdam, other European cities, and the U.S.

—R.S.F.

Conservatives to Certify Women Cantors

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America will begin granting the diploma of Hazzan (cantor) to women in its 1987 commencement, a certificate JTS reserved only for men until now.

The announcement by JTS Chancellor Ismar Schorsch in February is viewed as an historical break with the tradition, but one which Schorsch contended followed from JTS' controversial 1983 decision to ordain women as rabbis.

Erica Lippitz and Marla Rosenfeld-Barugel, both studying in the Cantorial Institute/Seminary College of Jewish Music, are expected to be the first

recipients of the diploma of Hazzan in the 1987 JTS commencement.

Critics of the new decision said it is even a more serious breach of *halacha* (Jewish Law) than the earlier one because women will be obligated to serve a function *halacha* forbids them.

Rabbi Ronald Price, executive director of the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism, said the decision is tantamount to obliging women to violate Jewish law. He contended that cantors traditionally lead the prayer services and fulfill the obligations of their congregants to recite some mandatory prayers. But, Price said, "women cannot fulfill the man's prayer obligation, which is the major function of a cantor."

Schorsch defended his decision as being in accordance with Jewish law, saying he had based it on the same justification as the decision to ordain women.

He reasoned that women can change their status under Jewish law by accepting the timebound obligations traditionally reserved for men. If a woman chooses to honor those obligations—which include praying three times daily, putting on *tefillin* (phylacteries) and other time-oriented rituals—she may serve as a rabbi or cantor.

Responding to Price's charge that JTS has taken the egalitarian principle too far, and was overly concerned with feminist issues because they are popular and attract attention, Schorsch said egalitarianism is "the popular will of the [Conservative] movement."

The future cantors said the decision was a victory and a profound joy for themselves and other women who want to receive the diploma. They called the decision "a new chapter in Jewish history."

(JTA)

20 Women Ordained as Rabbis

Four of the 20 women ordained as Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis last May and June have been named solo rabbis of congregations, and five have been placed as Assistant Rabbis, according to the annual Jewish Telegraphic Agency survey of such placements. These ordinations bring to 130 the number of women ordained as rabbis since the ordination of women began in 1972. One woman received ordination as a Conservative rabbi, seven as Reconstructionist rabbis, and 12 as Reform rabbis.

CONSERVATIVE

Nina Feinstein, of Dallas, has not sought placement.

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

Gail Glicksman, of Yeadon PA,

appointed to a position in the health professions division of the University of Pennsylvania.

Judy Gary, of Richmond VA, engaged in full-time study for a doctorate in Jewish philosophy at Temple University.

Lauren Levy, of Plainsboro NJ, named Program Director at the Hillel of Rutgers University.

Sue Levy, of Abington PA, named solo rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in Dover DE.

Avis Miller, of Pawtuckett RI, named Assistant Rabbi of Adas Israel Congregation in Washington.

Joan Sacks, of Philadelphia, has returned to Philadelphia.

Sheila Weinberg, of New York, named solo rabbi of Beth Am Shalom in Penn Valley PA.

REFORM

Eve Ben-Ora, of Minneapolis, named Director of Education and Programming at Temple Emanuel in Denver.

Judith Cohen-Rosenberg, of Brooklyn, Assistant Rabbi at B'rith Kodesh Temple, in Rochester NY.

Sue Levi Elwell, of Buffalo NY, named Assistant Rabbi at Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles.

Ellen Greenspan, of Scarsdale NY, named Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia.

Margaret Holob, of Tustin CA, named an advocate in the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles.

Ruth Langer is studying for a doctorate in rabbinic literature at the Jerusalem campus of the HUC-JIR.

Margaret Meyer, of Cincinnati, named rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom of Middletown OH.

Shira Milgrom, of Berkeley CA, named Assistant Rabbi at the Jewish Community Center in White Plains NY.

Nina Mizrachi, named Assistant Director of Outreach at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Linda Motzkin, of Los Angeles, named co-rabbi, with her husband at Temple Sinai in Saratoga NY.

Julie Schwartz, of Cincinnati, appointed a U.S. Navy chaplain in San Francisco.

Paula Winnig, of Milwaukee, named Assistant Rabbi at Temple Sinai of Roslyn in Roslyn Heights NY.

Orthodox Nurses Teach Breast Exam

The Nurses Section of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists (AOJS) has initiated a campaign to teach Jewish women the technique of breast self-examination.

RN Linda Moed, a pediatric nurse-practitioner in hematology/oncology who holds a B.S.N. and is a leader of the Section, said that the program received special impetus from the growing evidence that Jewish women have a higher incidence of breast cancer.

Members of the Section, she said, are currently doing research on the factors that contribute to this problem and its possible causes, with an eye to preventive measures. They are writing an article on the subject which will be distributed to different Jewish institutions such as Jewish centers, synagogues, and *mikvahs*.

Mikvahs, Moed continued, are envisioned as one of the prime sites for the nurses to hold sessions to teach women the five-minute breast self-examination technique.

The nurses also hope to teach the technique and make available pamphlets and posters about it at synagogue sisterhoods, Jewish centers, and organizations.

Jewish institutions wishing to arrange for a session where the nurses will demonstrate the breast examination technique can contact the AOJS office at (718) 338-8593. (JTA)

B'nai B'rith Women Study Bias vs. Women Lawyers

A study of discrimination and gender bias in the Philadelphia legal community is being planned to verify the problem, according to a report in *B'nai B'rith Women*. The study is being undertaken in cooperation with the Women's Law Project of the newly-formed Women's Rights Commission of the Philadelphia Bar Association. It will examine how women are treated as attorneys, litigants, and witnesses.

Meryl Gindin, a corporate attorney for the past three years and president of the BBW Berna Marshall chapter in Philadelphia, said that a very powerful form of discrimination comes into play when a woman takes a job in a law firm, based upon male perception of how a woman should behave. "A woman can be aggressive, tough, authoritative, and strong, all of the things a client wants her to be," Gindin declared. But the rest of the time, that same tough attorney is expected to be "a good little girl. Authoritativeness in a man is regarded as pushiness in a woman; adamancy is seen as strength of character in a man but is called bitchiness in a woman."

Solon Apologizes to Jews, Women, Gays

Former California State Sen. John Schmitz has issued an apology to Jews, women and homosexuals as part of a \$20,000 settlement of a \$10 million defamation suit arising from a press release issued by Schmitz's office in 1981.

Schmitz, a former member of the ultra-conservative John Birch Society, issued the news release after a feminist attorney had handed him a chastity belt to protest his views during legislative hearings on a proposed anti-abortion measure.

The release denounced witnesses opposing the measure as "imported lesbians from anti-male and pro-abortion queer groups in San Francisco." The audience at the hearing was described as "a sea of hard, Jewish and [arguably] female faces."

The settlement, as well as Schmitz's \$30,000 in legal bills, will be paid from California state funds. (JTA)

Aiding Desparecidos' Kin

The Israeli branch of an international body set up to aid the families of the 30,000 people who disappeared during the rule of the military junta in Argentina during the 1970's will be headed by Histadrut, Israel's labor federation.

Histadrut Secretary General Yisrael Kessar, addressing leaders of the Organization of Argentine Mothers of Missing People, said Jews must be as sensitive as other people all over the world to the fate of the missing in Argentina. An estimated 3,000 of the missing were Jewish, many of them teenagers [see LILITH #15].

Child Support Aid Promised

Attorneys in 10 states and the District of Columbia have volunteered to assist Na'amat, the largest women's organization in Israel, in obtaining child support payments for Israeli women from Israeli fathers now living in the United States, according to Sharon Shenhav, legal advisor to Na'amat in Jerusalem.

Shenhav was promised pro bono legal help on five specific cases in three states, and other legal aid as needed. In San Diego, an attorney will seek implementation of a California support order issued when the couple lived there, she told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an interview. In a Miami case, an attorney volunteered to obtain a judgment against an Israeli engineer living there, who was ordered by a Jerusalem court to pay his wife in Israel support for their four children. Members of the Women's Bar Association in Florida will also handle a Pensacola and a Hollywood case, Shenhav said. In upstate New York, an order to show cause issued by a Tel Aviv court will be served to initiate a support proceeding. (JTA)

Anne Frank Diary Controversy

The Anne Frank Center in New York has joined the mounting national protest against a Federal court ruling that upheld the right of a group of Christian fundamentalist parents in Greenville, TN to keep their children out of the local public school when "The Diary of Anne Frank" was read in classrooms as part of the curriculum.

The decision by Judge Thomas Hull on October 24 that the parents had the right

to protect their children from what they consider "Godless" influences and teach them to read at home, shocked academic, legal, publishing and religious circles all over the country.

"The Diary of Anne Frank" was found objectionable by the parents because it stresses humanitarian values and deems all religions to be of equal value, an anathema to the religious right.

At a press conference, Johanna Reiss, author of *The Upstairs Room*, a book about her own experiences as a Jewish child hiding in Holland during the war, said, "I wonder if our children are not supposed to know there really was a World War II." She said her book has been removed from libraries in the South.

The Center, which will appeal the decision, is coordinating the U.S. tour of the international exhibit, "Anne Frank in the World: 1929-1945." The exhibit,

which opened in New York in 1985, has already been shown in Miami, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Des Moines, Tulsa, and Cleveland. Twelve more cities are on the list for 1987.

The exhibit provides a glimpse into the life of Anne Frank and her family before and during their hiding from the Nazis in a small attic in Amsterdam. It also documents events leading to the Nazis' rise to power, as well as conditions in occupied Holland during the war.

The remarkable story is told through some 800 photographs (including some previously unpublished), many of which have been secured from private collections and from Dutch and German archives through the efforts of the Anne Frank Center in Amsterdam, sponsors of the exhibition. The exhibit also includes archival documents, a video documentary and a model of the secret annex used by the Frank family. (JTA)

MAZEL TOV

Italian Jew Wins Nobel Prize

Dr. Rita Levi-Montalcini, who shared the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology with American biochemist Stanley Cohen, comes from a family of Italian Jewish intellectuals in Turin. Now, at 77, this small, elegant, bright-eyed woman recalls first hearing the expression "freethinker" from her father, Prof. Giuseppe Levi, at the age of three.

That and deeply ingrained feminism—her idol, she says, was Simone de Beauvoir—defined her life and work. But her distinguished career was also shaped by the people and events that marked the fate of the Jewish people in this century.

Her family left Italy to escape the stultifying and repressive atmosphere of Mussolini's fascism. They lived in Belgium for a time, but when the Nazis invaded in 1940, they fled back to Italy. Because she was Jewish she was denied employment and research facilities, though she already held a Doctorate.

Because of the family's opposition to fascism, they were forced to live clandestinely in Florence under an assumed name.

In a makeshift laboratory, set up in her bedroom, Levi-Montalcini conducted experiments secretly during the war years. She begged for eggs "for needy children" from farmers and extracted the embryos for her work. The results of her experiments went unpublished in fascist Italy because "she belonged to the Jewish race."

Levi-Montalcini was the first woman admitted to the Pontifical Academy of Science and, in 1968, the sixth woman to gain admittance to the American Academy of Science.

Her Nobel Prize stemmed from work completed in the U.S. in 1951: discovery of NGF, a protein growth factor that stimulates nerve cell development. The discovery holds out promise that cures can be found for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, which attack the human nervous system.

—Lisa Palmieri-Billig (JTA)

AWARDS AND APPOINTMENTS

Sharon Alman, Lynne Burgess and Jan Alexander Tavrytzky were among the twenty-two Jewish cadets graduated in May from U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force Academies and commissioned as officers.

The late **Senda Berenson**, the first director of physical education (1892-1911) at Smith College, Northhampton MA, and chairperson of the U.S. Women's Basketball Commission from 1905-1917, inducted into the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, in Netanya, Israel.

Sara Berger, elected President of the Jewish Community of Amherst MA.



Erica Lippitz (l.) and Marla Rosenfeld Barugel will be the first women to receive the Conservative Cantor diploma.

Shoshana Cardin of Baltimore, elected to a third term as President of the Council of Jewish Federations.

Ilana DeBare, a journalism student at the University of California at Berkeley, named winner of the Jewish Student Press Service's Robert and Scott Shull Prize for outstanding Jewish Student Journalism.

Yaffa Eliach, Professor of Judaic Studies, Brooklyn College, received a Guggenheim award for her proposed project on the shtetl of Eisysky, 1070-1944.

Eleanor Fraenkel, elected President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Baton Rouge LA.

Dorothy Goren, Nita Levy, Phyllis Margolius, and Phyllis Sutker are among the ten newly elected directors of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Elizabeth Holtzman, Brooklyn District Attorney, received the National Association of Holocaust Educators' 1986 Janus Korczak Humanitarian Award, at the Eighth Annual Holocaust Conference at Kent State University.

Ellen Isler, appointed Executive Director of the American Zionist Youth Foundation of New York.

Miriam Jerris, appointed full-time Director of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, in Farmington Hills MI.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Professor of Performance Studies, New York University, received a Guggenheim award for her proposed project on the formation of vernacular culture in New York City.

Ida Kramer of Rock Island IL, named Executive Director of the Quad City Jewish Federation.

Brandy Hope Langston and her sister, **Sherri Crystal**, are the first two Jewish sisters to be enrolled as cadets in the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Dr. Ann Lapidus Lerner, appointed Dean of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America's College of Jewish Studies, New York.

Carol Lundgren, of the *St. Louis Jewish Light*, awarded the 1986 Simon Rockower Award for excellence in North American Jewish Journalism for "Bar Mitzvah in Cracow Sparks Conflict."

Grace Paley, named as New York's first State Author.

Dorothy Reitman, of Montreal, elected President of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Reitman is the first woman elected to this office.

Judith Roden, Philip A. Allen Professor of Psychology and Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University, received a Guggenheim award for her proposed project on the causes and consequences of the increasing concern with body image.

Viki Rouff, of Binghamton NY, elected President of the Jewish Federation of Broome County.

Lore Segal, of Chicago, presented with the 1986 Harold U. Ribalow Prize for Jewish fiction, administered by *Hadassah Magazine*, for her novel, *Her First American*.

Sheila F. Segal named Editor of the Jewish Publication Society.

Mira Spivack of Winnipeg, appointed to fill the Senate seat left vacant by the death of Paul Yuzik, making her the first Jewish woman to serve in the federal legislative body.

Ethel Taft, installed as President of the Conference of Jewish Communal Services in New York.

Miriam Yenkin, elected to a second term as President of the Columbus OH Jewish Federation.

Tulia Zevi, first woman President of the Italian Jewish Communities, reelected by a landslide.

OBITUARIES

Amy Adina Schulman, ardent Zionist, political activist, and student, died suddenly of a brain aneurysm on November 13, 1986 in New Brunswick, N.J., at age 20.

Born and raised in Princeton, Amy Adina was part of the Labor Zionist movement from the age of 12.

At Rutgers University, where she was studying neurobiology and Judaic Studies, Amy Adina was a leader of the Progressive Zionist Caucus and founder of her Bayit, one of a nationwide network of campus residences organized around Jewish activities.

On campus, she made waves—struggling to unite Zionist organizations and liberation movements in common causes of solidarity.

Her parents Ruth and Mel Schulman and her brothers Dan and Joel Schulman have established a trust to provide scholarships and funding for programs which promote the causes to which she was committed. Contributions may be sent to the Amy Adina Memorial Fund, c/o The Jewish Center, Princeton, New Jersey, 08540.

—Sherry Rosen

Caroline Gruss, who, with her husband Joseph Gruss, was a leading benefactor of Jewish education in the United States and Israel, died at home Jan. 14 after a long illness. She was 76.

Born in Poland, Gruss was trained as a lawyer at the University of Lvov, where she also studied classical languages. She and her husband came to the United States in 1937. The Caroline and Joseph Gruss Center at Yeshiva University in Jerusalem is a modern, five-acre complex designed as a permanent campus-home for programs in Israel. The Grusses also established and expanded several Jewish schools.

Inna Meiman of Moscow, who was

allowed to go abroad for treatment of a tumor on her neck died Feb. 9 in Georgetown University Hospital. She was 54 years old.

She had refused to leave the Soviet Union earlier because her husband, Naum, a refusenik, was not allowed to accompany her. Inna, a teacher of English was married in 1981 to Naum, a mathematician who has been refused an exit visa for 12 years.

Meiman was admitted to the hospital on January 20 and was undergoing tests for the start of chemotherapy. When she applied to go abroad she said she wanted to undergo specialized radiation treatment, her only hope for survival.

The Soviets granted Meiman a temporary visa for one year's stay. They would not allow her husband to come with her and had turned down his visa request on grounds of knowing "state secrets." He is also characterized as a dissident by dint of his membership in the now disbanded Moscow Helsinki monitoring group.

When she arrived in Washington, Inna Meiman described her own prognosis as "very grim." She said that if she "had been allowed to come three years ago, my chances would be better." She added that she was also dismayed that her husband, her son and his family were not permitted to join her. Her husband's daughter, Olga Plum, lives in Boulder CO.

On arriving here, Meiman said, "I haven't come to America to die; I have come to recover and to help others to get out of the Soviet Union." Admitting that she had left the USSR, and her husband, with mixed emotions, said she was "delighted" to prove "we are not slaves but people with rights." (JTA)

Yuri Suhl, a novelist, poet and biographer who was active in the civil rights and peace movements and the preservation of Yiddish culture, died in Oak Bluffs, Mass., on November 8 at the age of 78.

Suhl authored four books of Yiddish verse. He was best known for his English works, which included *Ernestine Rose and the Battle for Rights* (NY: Reynal & Co., 1959, out of print) and *They Fought Back*, a history of Jewish resistance in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II, published in 1967.

He was the author of 10 books for children and two autobiographical novels, "One Foot in America" and "Cowboy on a Wooden Horse."

Suhl became controversial for his efforts to prevent the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. He became a trustee of the Rosenberg Children's Trust Fund. Suhl was also an outspoken critic of the persecution of Jews in Poland and the Soviet Union. He identified himself politically as a Socialist. (JTA)



Photographs by Marilynne Herbert

FAMILIAR CRUELITIES:

A Nightmare Journey Through South Africa

In the following memoir, Mira Hamermesh, a Polish-born Jewish painter-turned-filmmaker now living in England, describes what led to the making of *Maids and Madams*, her one-hour prize-winning film about the relationship between Black and white women in South Africa.

Hamermesh, born in Lodz, survived World War II by escaping early in the war to Palestine. From Palestine, Hamermesh migrated to England, where she became a citizen. In 1960, however, she returned to Lodz as a scholarship student at its prestigious Polish Film School—the first Westerner to be admitted. Her first student film, called “Black Pompeii,” was about the Lodz ghetto cemetery, in which she found her mother’s grave.

Hamermesh went on to make a number of films that reflected her Holocaust background. Involved as the only woman in a group of about 30 experts brought in to help set up Israeli television, she made “*Lochamei Ha-Getaot*” (Fighters of the Ghetto).

The feminist consciousness that Hamermesh developed while working on a film for Thames TV called “Two Women,” her self-declared “obsessions” with “war, women, and Jews,” and her sense of herself as an uprooted person “at home in the world at large and not really at home in any specific place” all coalesced into the making of *Maids and Madams*.

The one-hour documentary is a quietly moving, intimate portrait of the lives of Black “Maids” and their white mistresses, or “Madams,” who collude in the system of South African apartheid.

Maids and Madams premiered on British television’s Channel Four on June 22, 1985, to great critical acclaim. It has since been shown at film festivals throughout Western Europe, in all the English-speaking countries, and on P.B.S. stations in the United States.

—Shirley Frank

BY MIRA HAMERMESH

In the beginning it was an idea in search of a country. Images from newspaper clippings, books, events and people spanning the distance of time and geography tumbled through my mind, magnified by memories of my childhood in Poland.

South Africa became the magnet pulling towards itself shrapnel-like fragments lodged in the heart of my war trauma.

I was born in the Polish industrial city of Lodz to a middle-class family, a mother claiming *yichus* (status deriving from descent) from a rabbinical family, a father belonging to a family who had made good economically.

We children were already very secularized and going to Polish schools. My brother, the oldest of us children, was a champion skier and a tennis player; my older sister, the middle child, was a Zionist from very young age. I, being the youngest, was a dream child, lost in books; my passions were literature and medicine.

My consciousness was born at the age of 14 with the dropping of the first



German bombs on our city. As each day brought new restrictions, I watched my bewildered family cope with the rapid succession of racial laws, which stripped Jews of their civil rights. Aroused to a spirit of resistance and stubbornness, there was no way that I would submit to all the restrictions which were already being enforced within the first months of the German occupation.

Dreamer that I was, and out of touch with reality—but perhaps in touch with another kind of reality—I engineered a crazy plot to be reunited with my sister, who was by then in Palestine, sent to an agriculture school called Ben Shemen. The remarkable thing was that my parents wouldn't let me go alone, and sent my brother as my chaperone and that's how he, too, survived, though we

were separated in the course of that year-long adventure.

Having gotten myself from Lodz to Vilna, I was among a handful of exceptionally fortunate children to whom the Russians gave a transit permit; we traveled luxuriously from Vilna to Moscow to Odessa. From there to Istanbul, and from Beirut by taxi to Haifa.

South African Jewish Women—Recent Fiction

Freed, Lynn: *Home Ground*. NY: Summit Books, 1986

Gordimer, Nadine: *A Sport of Nature*. NY: Knopf, 1987

If I could call myself a child of the war, I must emphasize that my war experience was easy in comparison to others'. Although a child of parents who did not survive the war (my father sadly and tragically was deported from the Lodz ghetto in the last transport to Auschwitz—had the war ended two days earlier, he might have been alive; my mother died in the ghetto, of hunger, but possibly also of hunger-generated illness), I myself have not been in a ghetto or camp. And while I experienced encounters with the enemy, I was not hunted down.

Though I personally never set foot in a ghetto and was spared the experience of the deportations which led to the death camps, my rage against racism has stayed with me for life, taking on the rigor of obsession.

The wound of racism reopens in contact with words and images belonging to apartheid. Armed police with dogs and military trucks conjure up the German invasion of Poland in September of 1939 which resulted in the immediate segregation of the Jews. "Township" is interchangeable with "Jewish Ghetto," resettlement with deportation.

A chance meeting with a South African Jewish academic on sabbatical in London injects direction and form into my hesitant thoughts. M. is a writer and academic; she has published a book about poverty and legislation and the beginnings of anti-labor laws in South African legislation.

M. tries to convert me to Marxism—and I try to convert her to feminism. My obsession with sexism, unlike racism, came to me later in life...through the discovery of how striking the parallels were between the assumptions made about the inferiority of women and the inferiority of some races. To a student of the language of prejudice, racist and sexist syntax are interchangeable.

M. reads my notes about what I imagine is likely to be the exploration of racism and sexism in South Africa. She gives me a book written by Jacklyn Cock, a friend of hers, entitled *Maids and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation*, published by Ravan Press, Johannesburg, in 1980.

The book is a sociological analysis of the particular role that women play in the labor market, from a Marxist and a feminist point of view, the first of its kind.

The book sets the seal of approval for my ideas and validates my thesis about racism and sexism as twin forces—both potentially lethal elements in social organization—which set the patterns of prejudice.

The oppression of Blacks in South Africa has been explored from many angles: Marxist class struggle, colonial racism and, of course, human rights. But at the time I worked on the film idea, the wider issues of racism had not been linked to sexism.

An in-depth analysis of apartheid's policies and its economic base reveals the existence of a vital link between racism and sexism. Both have been harnessed in the service of the repressive system, though the sexist element has until now been largely undetected.

Domestic service is a microcosm of the existing patterns of inequality of South Africa. African women are at the bottom of the heap of apartheid's discrimination. Over a million Black women live in a state of domestic bondage, under-paid, working long hours, and at the mercy of Draconian laws which separate them from their families. Every white household relies on the unlimited pool of Black, cheap, unskilled female labor reserved for the domestic sector.

The political conflicts and the personal day-to-day confrontations between the Blacks and whites have been mainly perceived through the interactions of males. On both sides of the fence, the female identity has been submerged in the collective identity of the oppressed or the oppressor.

However, apartheid, like charity, begins at home. And Madam's bedroom, kitchen and nursery are the battle zones where the struggle for racial and sexist domination takes place. Home is the territory where Black and white women (and children) confront each other in a state of racial enmity through encounters of a most intimate though impersonal kind.

The white women's glib protestations about her personal concern for her Black servants runs counter to the politics of apartheid and her voluntary or involuntary collusion with it. The moral dilemma facing the helpmates of the master race is indeed a tragic one with no easy solutions.

It's yet another variant on the theme which fascinates me: women trapped in situations of conflict and confrontation—be they of a military, racial, religious or ideological nature. Without changing the central idea, which initially had the title "Reluctant Enemies"—with or without a question mark—the title for the film crystallizes into "Maids and Madams."

Now it has become a film idea in search of a network. A friendly producer consents to meet me and discuss the project. "You are trying to say too much," he pronounces. "Stick to racism and definitely leave sexism out!"

Another producer, from a rival network, begins the interview with a question which indirectly casts doubts on my credibility: "Why should a Polish-born Jewish woman, settled in England, with no personal ties to South Africa, never having visited the country, choose to make a film there?"

"Because of my mother, I want to dramatize my obsession!"

I have been writing about my mother in the context of the Holocaust, in analyzing the role of women in relation to men who live by the command of what I call the warrior's ethos, whether in uniform or not. Around this subject, I once posed the question: What endangered my mother's life more, her being a woman or a Jew? How lethal it was in her case that she was a female and a Jew!

The iconography of Black martyrdom has names like Sharpsville, Soweto, and lamenting mothers picking dead children up from dust-covered roads. The lament is familiar to me and brings back to life my dead mother, who only 40 years ago in the heart of Europe was part of a racial massacre.

During the ensuing months of meetings in the long and winding corridors of "media power," I reflect on

the situation of women like myself, put on the defensive when they trespass on what is accepted to be the "male" realm of politics.

In the end "Maids and Madams" is accepted with enthusiasm by Britain's innovative Channel Four. For a variety of reasons the film went into production after a gap of three years. The protracted period it took to get it made proved to be a testing time not only for my stamina but also for my sense of identity as a filmmaker, a woman, and a Jew.

On a first-time visit to a country where the perversities of the racial divide are the norm, somebody like me is doomed to offend or be offended. I order myself: "Mira, keep your mouth shut," which is easier said than done, and, "let other people do the talking!"

I am staying with M., who since her return home has become a passionate feminist while remaining faithful to Marx.

Her house in a suburb of Johannesburg could be described as a colonial-style bungalow situated in a well-kept garden. "No swimming pool"—she proudly draws attention to the absence of the usual trappings of middle class wealth.

The introduction to Martha, her domestic, is accompanied by apologetic explanations: By providing employment to women like Martha, she is instrumental in assisting her extended family who desperately depend on Martha's earnings. M. disapproves of the new trend among younger, liberated women who, in order to satisfy their uneasy conscience and white liberal guilt, refuse to employ live-in domestics.

Martha brings me breakfast in bed without being asked. She anticipates my needs. She washes my underwear and irons my crumpled shirts and dresses. To Martha I am another white Madam, and the color of my skin is a passport to countless privileges which I am still vague about, but which are to her a key to survival drilled into her consciousness from the day she was born.

The racial hazards to Martha's life have to do with the "magic" power of my race. Martha's vision of life's hardships is set to a carefully devised color chart which segregates three categories of people: Blacks, Coloureds and whites.

My color penetrates to the very core of her existence, and mutilates her, as surely as if I took a knife and cut into her vital organs. Her Blackness and her full humanity are stigmatized by it. The tension between the powerful, whom I represent to her, and the powerless makes Martha into a cultural outsider on two counts; both her race and her gender offer her up as a victim to the forces of annihilation.

It matters little what grand statements I make about my revulsion against apartheid. The grotesque inequality between us is fixed by law and custom,

and there is no way I can convey to Martha that I myself, as a woman, am marked by the experience of a cultural outsider.

Apartheid plays havoc with my notion of sisterhood. To women like Martha I am a white Madam in collusion with the white race, which has a vested interest in the oppression and exploitation of her race.

The historical paradox I am caught in is meaningless to Martha, for she is ignorant about the history of women like my mother, whose Jewish race condemned her to death. Today in Martha's kitchen, my race bestows on me the rank of a "mythic" superiority, with all the advantages this entails.

Martha moves slowly, at a pace of someone either bored or intentionally trying to make each chore last longer. She sweeps the carpet with a straw broom. "No vacuum cleaner?" I ask my hostess. "It's broken," M. explains. "Martha prefers to use a broom." I will repeatedly hear from white women how Black women have an aversion towards domestic technology.

With time I'll meet domestics who give me their version of the story. Many Madams, incredible as it sounds, forbid the use of washing machines and other expensive gadgets, anticipating breakage, so convinced are they of the stupidity and clumsiness of Black minds and hands.

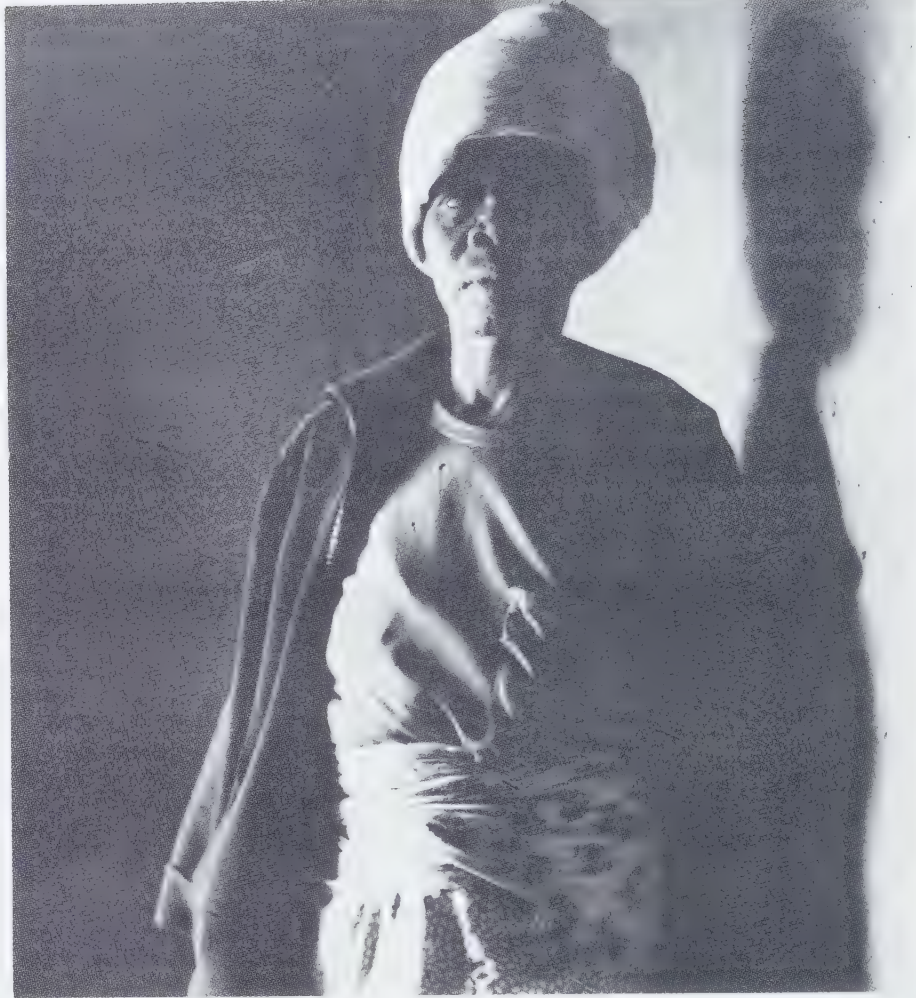
The catalogue of racist assumptions which I overhear grows daily. My outsider's ears pick up the unintentional slights, which many white liberals let drop, the kind of slips we all catch in ourselves when we make comments about women in unguarded moments: "Oh, you know the Blacks, they have no idea about technology" or "Well, you know how the Blacks are, they have no feeling for time."

Little does one then understand that those Blacks, who "have so little idea of time," usually have to get up at four o'clock in the morning, make their way to the place of work and return. They are possibly the most deprived-of-sleep nation walking on its feet.

Martha's age is indefinable. At times I think she is in her thirties or even older. I am shocked to discover she is only 23 years old, and already a mother of three.

M. takes me on a tour of the rich suburbs of Johannesburg. Imagine South Africa to be like Hollywood or Beverly Hills. That's what white South Africa is, a chain of exceedingly beautiful, well-kept, prosperous suburbs, and rural countryside.

We drive through well-planned, wide, tree-lined avenues, mostly free of traffic. The houses are in the colonial ground-level style. The air of tranquility and prosperity is at odds with the high walls, locked gates, and electronically-controlled



security measures reinforced with pictorial representations of guard dogs with warnings in English and Afrikans about their vicious presence.

On the road a white supervisor directs a Black electricity repair crew. No white person does any manual labor, ever. As you look around the landscape, you tell yourself, this country was built with Black hands. There isn't one aspect which is man-made which hasn't been carried out with the sweat of Black labor.

What dominates in the human landscape is not whether you're Jewish or Christian but white. Being white is the most important factor in one's identity; being Jewish becomes secondary.

For me, being identified as white was a shock, as was my slow self-identification making a shift into this new classification. Foremost, I was white. White to myself. White in relation to other whites. White in relation to Blacks. It doesn't matter at all what my feelings, conflicts, heritage are. The aspect of being white in a sea of Blackness suddenly dominates—the system makes it dominant.

We pass an elderly Black woman who carried a cardboard box on her head. "Where are you going, sis?" M. offers her

a lift. "In tribal languages, women address each other as 'sister,'" M. explains. The woman is on her way to the bus station to visit her children living in Alexandria township.

"What's in the box?" M. inquires. "Crusts of dried bread." On impulse M. pulls up her car in front of a continental patisserie. Left alone with the woman, I try to engage her in conversation but all I get is "Yes, Ma'am, no Ma'am." She is visibly embarrassed by me, the white stranger, chatting to her like to an equal.

She finds escape from the discomfort of my company by joyously greeting a friend, a Black woman who, like her, is burdened with a heavy load. She gets out of the car to chat with her friend and from the gestures she makes I understand that she implies the possibility of getting a ride.

Without warning, the peaceful scene turns into pandemonium. A gray police van driven at full speed brakes with equal disregard for safety. Four policemen with truncheons—two Black and two white—swing into action.

The purpose of the raid is to catch unsuspecting Blacks whose residential permits are not in order or who work "illegally" in white areas. (Until recently,

every Black African had to have a pass which gave all information about him. If he's caught by chance in a white city without a valid residential permit from his employer, the raiding cars pick him up. And whatever else they do with him, they will return him to his homeland.)

The unlucky individuals are led towards the van. Some protest, some resist, most go quietly, familiar with the futility of arguing or resisting. Speed and surprise are an integral part of the raid strategy.

M. emerges from the shop with a large box of cakes. Realizing what has taken place, she runs towards the van just as the door is being bolted. She gets into an argument with the white policeman, trying to persuade him that the woman he has picked up is in fact her newly acquired domestic. "Her pass book is not endorsed," he says.

M. pleads with him, invoking an imaginary bedridden mother who depends on the service of this new domestic, as she suffers from a slipped disc. The appeal of the helplessness of white women makes him relent. The van door swings open and the woman steps down and follows "her Madam" back to the car.

"If more Madams would protest, they couldn't do to us what they are doing." The Black woman wipes her tears, overflowing with gratitude.

Witnessing the raid reopens the nagging question about one's full humanity and responsibility. I am thinking of a Jewish ghetto. Is that what the Polish women felt during the German occupation, watching raids against Jews? How long does it take before one gets used to such raids and learns to carry on living as if such things didn't happen?

M. deposits the Black woman at a downtown bus stop. She joins a mile-long queue reserved "for Blacks only."

M. vents her rage, but I feel like a penitent of whom the question is: "Am I my Black sister's keeper?"

Bernadette Mosala is the first Black woman I meet who puts me in my place. Her official title is Director in Charge of Family Life at the South African Council of Churches. I recognize her indignation and impatience with whites, a kindred spirit of rebelliousness.

Bernadette is driving me to a resettlement community. We stop at a roadside cafe for refreshments. "We have no license for Blacks," the woman behind the counter informs me. I buy refreshments and we eat and drink sitting by the curb.

We watch a Black woman with a white baby strapped to her back. I discuss it with Bernadette. "Every time you see a Maid with a white child, be sure her own is neglected and hungry," she says.

Western psychological text-books stress the importance of the early bonding between an infant and a loving mother or her surrogate as the key to the understanding of the development of the individual's emotional life. But life in South Africa discredits this theory. Here, the first bonding takes place between white infants and Black mother substitutes. And contrary to all expectations, instead of the loving relationships which should follow, what happens is that as adults, the very children who are loved and nursed by those Black hands and Black voices, demean this nurturing and loving person as the "shit" woman, born to serve and clean up after them.

Generations of whites raised by affectionate and indulgent Black women turn out to be keen racists with no trace of gratitude or affection towards the women who loved and nurtured them. She is no black Madonna to be worshipped as a symbol of maternal care.

The green, lush, well-cultivated land gives way without warning to an arid, dust bowl landscape. When you travel in South Africa, the eye is shocked by this sudden dividing line, where the green fields, the green orchards, the green countryside with the beautiful white mansions end suddenly—as if some wicked draftsman has drawn a line—and the parched, dust bowl countryside begins. The dramatic changes in the landscape are evidence of the ravages of apartheid as telling as the people themselves.

The change in the road surface signals that we are entering a rural ghetto, a "Homeland" with the long name of Bophuthatswana. The settlement itself resembles a draught-stricken, fly-infested camping site with fossilized agricultural implements left rusting. They are relics from a previous pastoral life, from which this community had been forcibly removed 15 years ago.

Bernadette introduces me to the three village chiefs, elderly, humbled men wearing Western-style outfits in tatters. After exchanges of pleasantries, Bernadette shares with me her painful insight. "When men are oppressed, it's a tragedy. When women are oppressed it's tradition."

In this adroitly phrased truth, Bernadette reveals to me the extent of her feminist concerns, which she upholds as passionately as her political stand against apartheid. In Bernadette I find a champion in the fight against the oppression of racism and sexism.

"You must talk to Sophie," I was told by a few women who began to scout for introductions to suitable Maids.

Asked to describe the routine of her working life, she recites it in the voice of a preacher: "Today is Monday as usual, first day of the week, starting from the

kitchen tidying up and then come back to washing and hanging. Tuesday is the ironing day. Wednesday you sort of tot up the house because it hasn't been looked after the first two days of the week. Then Thursday is the day off and then come Friday which is spring cleaning and Saturday you work in the morning and take a sort-of break in the afternoon. Then Sunday you sort of cook a big dinner because it's more like feasting day for Europeans. This has been my routine for 34 years, 52 weeks in a year."

Bernadette arranges a meeting with a group of domestics, some already retired, others still working. This meeting offers the first opportunity to have access to Black domestics away from the constraints of their white Madams' homes, where "yes, Madam" and "no, Madam" is the customary mode of Maid and Madam exchange.

The women give me a cheerful and witty account of their experiences. They are shrewd observers of character, and come across as experts on the psychology of family life dynamics—decoding bedroom secrets and opening up cupboards where the family skeletons are hidden away.

It soon transpires that of the eight women present, six worked most of their lives for Jewish families. They don't know that I am Jewish and that I anticipate with dread the revelations about Jewish employers.

The general consensus among the women is that with few exceptions, the Jewish Madams are as exploitative as the non-Jewish ones. The Jewish Masters are voted more generous with money.

One of the Maids protests. Her experience has been wonderful. She compares her Jewish Madam to "the Lady in Heaven," for she cared, and helped her and her extended family. The marriage of her three children took place in her Madam's home and they footed the bill.

I think of a white woman at a recent dinner party who explained the particular satisfaction she gained from having a chance, every day, to do something good in life. And I thought, "My God, you don't need to be a Mother Teresa here. All you need to do in South Africa is just be a proper human being with normal responses of compassion or concern. And when you give a *schmateh* to your Maid or when you send medicine for her sick child or when you inquire about her dying father, you are in fact infusing almost angelic qualities into her life and your own."

Johannesburg, I am told, is a Jewish city where the Jewish presence is strongly felt. Expecting an African New York, I find, instead, Jews hidden away by the suburban gentility. The Jewish impact is manifest more visibly on the

economic, cultural and political life of the country.

On the eve of the Jewish New Year I express a desire to go to the synagogue. My friend M. is not a synagogue-goer but she consents to make an exception for my sake. "It's a good place to make a study of the Jewish Madams and their Jewish Masters." M's self-mockery is laced with bitterness.

Whenever I travel I like to visit synagogues. They are like an oasis where I seek to find solace for my Jewish sorrow. But the visit to the main synagogue in Johannesburg gives me a jolt. In the country of apartheid the segregation of women from men has an unpleasant resonance.

The synagogue arrangement of Upstairs and Downstairs confirms the terms of the bargain struck between my Jewish brothers and God, which excludes me from the public rituals taking place in the synagogue. Those strictures, a living legacy of a more barbaric past, accentuate my painful reflections about the practice of this form of segregation.

I am the living symbol of the obstacle put in the Jewish man's path to his union with God. I represent the polluted or polluting matter to be put at a distance from his spiritual strivings.

Downstairs, soberly dressed men, wearing the *talit* (prayer shawl) conduct themselves with decorous solemnity. Upstairs, a show of sloth and frivolity is in stark contrast with the Downstairs display of spirituality and reverence for the Torah.

The segregation encourages and confirms the worst view of Jewish womankind. It proves an ideal arrangement: the Upstairs offers a home for the undesirable qualities, which the men of Downstairs project onto women.

I am celebrating the end of the New Year festivities at the home of E. The tastefully arranged apartment is filled with books, modern paintings, and a collection of African artifacts. My hosts are enlightened and cultured people whose gracious living does not exclude their commitment to the anti-apartheid whites.

Sitting across the coffee table from me is a well-known doctor, an urbane and well-informed man. He lights a cigarette and casually says: "Of course you must realize that the reason the Black Sash is tolerated at all is because it's a white women's organization, an extension of women's tradition of charity. If men would participate, the authorities would clamp down immediately."

Black Sash is a white all-women's human rights organization, so-called because members put on a black sash in all their public demonstrations. The office is primitive; it usually hasn't got money; the only piece of equipment that I would give the rank of modern was a

photocopying machine. It's staffed by volunteers.

People who are disoriented about a particular legal position or particular events that affect their family life—being arrested, being dismissed—come to Black Sash for advice on what to do. In many ways, voluntarism of white women does relieve the plight of Black women to a small degree. It is not to be minimized.

Being white women, they may have counted, consciously or unconsciously, on freedom from being harassed. So far, very few white women have been harassed on account of their sympathies or activities, since this belongs within the tradition of women doing good.

The doctor continues, "So we men keep busy earning money and our wives have the leisure to protest." The amused expression in his eyes hints that there is more to be said on the subject of women's "good works." "Believe me," the doctor looks at me shrewdly, "it's a fair division of concerns." He is careful not to drop his ashes onto the Persian carpet.

I look at the women gathered in the living room, most of whom are distinguished activists, and at their prosperous, successful husbands. Have the Jewish women become the "conscience keepers," traditionally a male preserve? Has a reversal of roles taken place?

Before taking my leave, I glance at the display of family photographs of absent children and grandchildren. The cherished photographs are evidence of the casualties of the apartheid system, which repels the younger generation. Children brought up by liberal Jewish parents choose to leave the country as a protest.

Apartheid is tearing Jewish family life apart.

The dispersion of young South African Jews is a fact of life. They are scattered over all the English-speaking world and Israel.

Soweto is a mere 20-minute drive from Johannesburg; the distance from Manhattan to Brooklyn.

In spite of the preparation of what to expect, I am in a state of shock.

There is something about the place which neither photographs nor verbal description can convey. It's hard not to surrender to the impression that one is in the middle of a nightmare created by a white dreamer who has wished for a world filled with Black robots housed in concrete boxes, only allowed to emerge from them before day-break, so that they will be on time in the suburbs or factories to perform the necessary service for whites—to be returned at the sunset hour to their boxes built of concrete which the white visionary calls houses and for which the robots have to pay rent.

The landscape created for the Blacks by the white dreamer is devoid of order, space, aesthetics and living green things. Two or three million people live on streets that have no names and which are identified only by numbers.

The very earth trembles, throwing up clouds of dust, when the robots transform themselves daily into human beings, kept alive by their own dreams.

In Soweto, one feels the violent urge to live and be human. In Soweto, violence, like Blackness, is pushed to the edge of endurance.

In Soweto it's easy to imagine every kind of catastrophe.

Whites have no right even to visit Black townships like Soweto. Few of those Madams who have live-in Maids in their homes, or who employ women who come in daily to work, know the landscape from which the Maids come. It is forbidden for a white person to stay overnight in Soweto, but in defiance B., an actress, invites me to stay the night.

B. lives in a modern, well-designed, four-bedroom bungalow, tastefully decorated, fitted out with all modern conveniences. This is a middle class household, belonging to the "intelligentsia class." On the shelves I find many of the same books I keep close at hand.

I wake up at four in the morning to watch how Soweto begins its working day. Streams of people are already making their way to bus-stops and the railway station. B. drives me to both places, where, under cover of darkness, I can observe the scene without being detected.

With daybreak, the sky above the township is blackened with pollution. A permanent heavy cloud hangs over it, like a lid placed over a frying pan. The smog has a rancid smell of wood and rubbish mixed with paraffin fumes.

When the tourist buses pass through Black townships, B. tells me, the guides explain that the primitive way of life is responsible for the pollution. They don't mention the fact that most townships have no electricity, and that burning wood or paraffin provides the only source of cooking and heating energy.

I tell B. about the propaganda films shot by the Germans during the war about life in the Jewish ghettos, to serve as "living proof" of the degeneracy of the Jewish race. Telling this to a Black woman, in Soweto, I feel like I am exposing the madness inherent in the white race, of which I am now part.

"Soweto is a time bomb," B. says, "a time bomb planted by the whites, in their madness. But the tragedy is that when it explodes it will touch off our madness as well." □

An earlier version of this article appeared in The Jewish Quarterly (London) Vol. 32 No. 4, January, 1985.



FAGEL SPEAKS

*Maternity Ward - 1936**

By Phyllis Stern

When I first came to New York
everything was brown, no trees.
I saw the concrete courtyards
of the Bronx.

Still, I found another village here,
friends who spoke my language,
joined the same struggle.
I led rent strikes, brought my students,
marched with the Council
of the Unemployed.

The poverty was no worse here
than in Poland: I remember my younger sister
dying of starvation; I could do nothing;
I smuggled tobacco on my body
after my father died.
Here though people thought it unusual
called it a depression
were willing to fight back.

I was never not political.
Politics kept me human.
It was impossible to live with so much need
and not see more than every day.
I felt myself a part of history.

Motl did not think the same.
He was jealous of my strength, never trusted it,
thought me ruthless because I valued
something else as much as him. He was afraid
I'd leave him, go places he couldn't.
He wanted me home like other women,
satisfied with mute caresses.
I didn't want the child at first,
even this marriage.

My brother Beryl doesn't understand.
He is single-minded, his politics bitter.
He thinks only of himself.
When he left, it was for different reasons.
He told me what he saw, the SS ships
at the harbor.
He believes in a world where
only their methods can work.

These last months I've been pregnant
is the first time I've had
to go slow, write down these thoughts.
I go to the park, see the green leaves
which make me think of spring in Ostroleka.

I'm having trouble breathing.
I'm losing more blood. I hear them talking
to the doctor, Motl and Beryl.
They always were allies, trying to tame me,
feeling I should give to them
what strength I have.

SOMETHING CRITICAL FOR MY MOTHER

By Barbara Berman

Years before my grandmother died I'd ask her gently
to stop with the stories of who went swimming,
who was at the latest Hadassah meeting, who ate what.
Tell me about Aunt Lizzie, her aunt who was married
without children, who took care of all related others,
the sons and daughters of working mothers
as if they were her own. Aunt Lizzie who brought me
bright paisley silk scarves, kvelled with quiet class,
wore black dresses, thick shoes, her white hair
in a bun. She lived until I was twenty-one.
Tell me more of your brother Adolph, who hitched each fall
from Brooklyn to the Colorado School of Mines
where he had an engineering scholarship. He collected
folksongs on each trip, but I don't know why.
Tell me more about what it was like for a young Jewish woman
in the twenties, who dared to smoke in public, who
"couldn't marry a man who didn't love music."
On and on she'd go about the quality of oranges in Miami,
as opposed to Jaffas, refusing to return to days I'd never hold.

And now as I speak to her daughter, because I've phoned
for a piece of information she can quickly supply,
she says what she misses most is what her mother knew -
The obscure botanical fact, the lyrics to a half-forgotten song.

When my grandmother died prayer books were buried with her,
an ancient honor for the chosen dead, those tattered pages,
the ink too faded to read. Each day we lose something critical,
and what remains will never be enough.

Barbara Berman is a writer living and working in Washington, D.C. Among other projects, she has directed the poetry series at the Washington Women's Arts Center. Her poetry and prose has appeared in the Washington Post, the Village Voice, New Age, the Washingtonian.

Phyllis Stern's poetry has been published in Jewish Currents magazine, Womanews, and the anthology Making Contact; this poem first appeared in Home Planet News (1983). She has also written articles on health for Whole Life Times.

*This poem is based on the diary of my aunt Fagel Shtern, a teacher and labor leader in the Yiddish community of New York, written during the last year of her life. She died in childbirth in 1936.

FREE IDA NUDEL!

The case of Ida Nudel, the long-time refusenik who endured and survived four bitter years of Siberian exile (see LILITH #10), is winning increasing attention in recent months—including appeals on her behalf by Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, historian Martin Gilbert, and human-rights lawyer Irwin Cotler.

Meanwhile Nudel, living in the Moldavian town of Bendery since 1982, is subject to KGB surveillance and harassment, and people have been warned to avoid her company. Last October, Nudel was forcibly prevented from traveling to Moscow to meet Wiesel.

She filed a complaint with the procurator of Bendery stating, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, that on October 23, 1986, she bought a ticket at the central bus depot and sat in her assigned seat. At 8 a.m., "two militiamen entered and announced that I must get off the bus. . . I refused. They continued to insist that it was in my interest to get off."

Asked by her whether they had the authority to order her off the vehicle, "they began to laugh and to threaten me. . . They dragged me by my hands and feet out the back door of the bus and threw me on the ground. Meanwhile, a police van arrived and they put me into it." She was taken to police headquarters, and a criminal file opened against her.

The local police chief admitted to Nudel that there was no legal basis for the militiamen's action, but advised her not to leave town "otherwise, I cannot guarantee you will stay alive."

Nudel's complaint asked under what law she was subjected to an act of violence; if the verbal declaration forbidding her to leave Bendery was legal; and how valid was the statement that her life was in danger.

Responding to this the day after she filed her complaint, L.D. Tederazh, assistant to Procurator Melnik, confirmed that the militia had acted illegally, assured Nudel she would not be harassed further, and told her she was "free to leave Bendery." Nudel asked for this in writing, and demanded the militiamen be prosecuted for assault.

While Nudel's situation in Bendery has not changed substantively, in November the Soviet envoy to the Vienna Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe reviewing

the Helsinki Accords held a lengthy discussion with her sister Elena Friedman who lives in Israel. *Jerusalem Post* correspondent Ilona Henry, who reported on this incident, wrote:

"Soviet officials are showing a new attitude towards Jewish and human rights demonstrators at the European Security Conference here, stopping to chat with the protestors on a personal basis. In the past, the Soviets would not even let demonstrators approach their embassies." (Some Soviet Jewry activists, however, disagree with this analysis, and believe that Soviet discussions with human rights demonstrators are merely a public relations ploy and mean little more.)

At the same time, McGill University law professor Cotler, involved with the Nudel case for the past eight years, held a five-and-a-half hour talk with Yuri Kashlev, ambassador and head of the Soviet delegation at the Vienna conference, and Vladimir Morozov, senior spokesman of the Foreign Ministry.

Cotler told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Morozov and Kashlev said there were 'state reasons' which prevented Nudel's departure. "I objected, quoting Gorbachev himself, who declared that no one can invoke state reasons after a lapse of more than 10 years. In Nudel's case 15 years have elapsed since she first asked for a visa."

He said he told the Soviet officials that Nudel was a symbol for the fate of Soviet Jewry as a whole. "As long as you keep her a prisoner," he told them, "nobody is going to believe your statements on human rights."

In December, British historian Martin Gilbert, in an appeal on behalf of Nudel, quoted from a letter, written by her in Bendery on December 7, and just received in the West, in which Ida Nudel describes herself thus: "I am a character Rudyard Kipling wrote about: the cat that walked by himself." She continued:

"I feel myself as a hostage, but my condition is different from the traditional hostage situation; no pistols are directed against my chest, everything looks like normal until the time when I want to change my place by my own will."

In her letter, Nudel points out that Jewish "resistance" in Russia, the struggle for exit visas, is always "peaceful," and she appeals to all of us:

"Remember those who are so far off, so isolated by distance and hostility. Remember those whose life is being destroyed now in punishment cells, half hungry, half getting frozen for no crime at all, but only for being a Jew. Remember those who, despite the persecutions and harassment, will celebrate our holiday, who will light up candles, who will tell their children about the history and dignity of the people they belong to."

Gilbert concluded: "No one symbolizes that dignity more than Ida Nudel herself. Few people have done more to try to influence that recent Jewish history than Ida has done in making known the plight of the Jewish prisoners, and seeking to comfort them. Is it beyond the ability of the Western world to end her 16-year separation from the Jewish State, to enable her to light the candles of freedom next year at her sister's side?"

LILITH Magazine is launching a Women's Appeal to Raissa Gorbachev on behalf of Ida Nudel. The Appeal appears on the facing page of this issue. The complete list of all those who have joined the Appeal will appear in issue #17.

Readers wishing to add their names to the Appeal—which will be presented to Soviet officials—should sign and return the petition as soon as possible.

Soviet Jewry activists have stressed that time is of the essence here. The Soviets, in recent months, have taken various steps (e.g., the return of Andrei Sakharov to Moscow) that indicate a possible sensitivity to Western opinion on human rights issues.

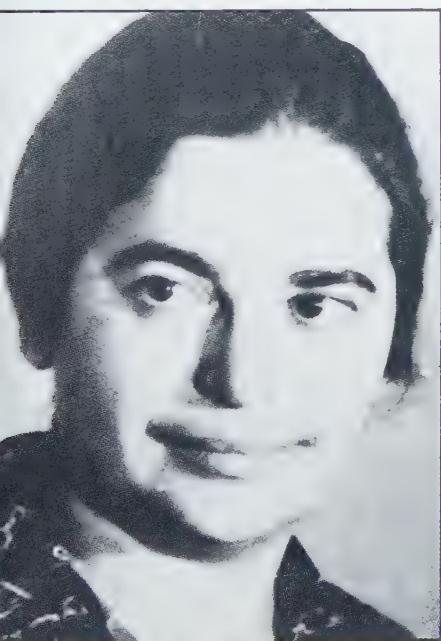
There have already been several appeals on behalf of Nudel (see story above). If we can present to Mrs. Gorbachev a significant number of signatures on an appeal from feminists—a constituency they have not yet heard from on this issue—we hope we can speed up her exit visa for Israel.

Please, therefore, take a few minutes to sign and circulate the Appeal. We can also send out to readers additional copies of the appeal on Page 17, upon request to Ida Nudel Appeal c/o LILITH, 250 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10107.

W

Raissa Gorbachev
The Kremlin
Moscow, USSR

AULINE BART
M. BRONER
ROSELLEN BROWN
VIVA CANTOR
HYLLIS CHESLER
ANE FONDA
ASCHA GARSON
PAULA GANTZ
AYE GINSBURG
BLU GREENBERG
OANNE GREENBERG
ELIZABETH HOLTZMAN
ERICA JONG
EATE KLARSFELD
RANCINE KLAGSBRUN
MAXINE KUMIN
EGGY MANN
MARY TYLER MOORE
EAH NAPOLIN
CYNTHIA OZICK
GRACE PALEY
ETTY COTTIN POGREBIN
SYLVIA ROTHCHILD
BARBARA SEAMAN
SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER
GLORIA STEINEM
MEREDITH TAX
MARY TRAVERS
IV ULLMANN



(Photo courtesy Na'amat USA)

Mrs. Gorbachev:

e appeal to you on behalf of Ida Nudel, who has sought for 15 years to be reunited with her sister Elena in Israel.

Nudel was sentenced in 1978 to four years' internal exile in Siberia for publicly declaring her wish for an exit visa to Israel.

An engineer-economist by profession, Nudel is now 55 years old and suffers from a heart condition aggravated by the hardships of her 4 years in Siberia, during the greater part of which she was compelled to live in barracks housing male criminals.

Barred from returning to her Moscow home on completion of her sentence, Nudel was finally allowed to settle in Bendery, Moldavia, where local authorities have on several occasions physically prevented her from travelling to Moscow, even to receive medical care, thus in effect prolonging her exile.

Recently Nudel wrote to your husband, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, saying:

"My apartment is under visual and audio surveillance. Young men whose very appearance causes me to shiver follow me wherever I go. . . . I cannot believe—who can—that such a mighty country as the Soviet Union terrorizes a person simply because she does not desire to live in this country and declares it openly. . . ."

Recent developments we've been following—including a number of encouraging signs and acts by General Secretary Gorbachev and his new openness ("glasnost") policy—lead us to hope that Ida Nudel may at last be allowed to rejoin her sister in Israel.

We appeal to you to do everything possible to make Ida Nudel's dream a reality. Such a decision, taken on humanitarian grounds, would be a most welcome demonstration of glasnost.

(Signed) _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE/PROVINCE _____

COUNTRY _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____

AFFILIATION (for identification purposes only) _____

DATE _____

COMEDY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Can We Laugh at Joan Rivers?

BY CELIA WEISMAN

Watching Joan Rivers squawk obscenities on her late night TV talk show, any politically correct feminist would label such pandering to the public as crassly commercial and dangerously exploitative of women.

Rivers' TV show and night-club performances, however, do not allow us to glimpse the far more complex and interesting Rivers revealed in the comedienne's recently published autobiography, *Enter Talking* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1986; written with Richard Meryman).

I'm not asking feminists, and in particular Jewish feminists, to enjoy Rivers' bad-mouthing; but I am insisting that we not dismiss her autobiography as so much more sexist dreck. The woman deserves to have her story heard.

Rivers is a nice Jewish doctor's daughter trained to become a lady. Like many children of the 1940's and '50's, she grew up with a workaholic father and a dependent, depressed mother in a home where no authentic feelings of love, hate, rage or joy were exchanged.

The Molinsky family, first of Brooklyn, later of Larchmont, clung to assimilationist ideals and tried to fulfill the immigrant dream of upward mobility. They successfully climbed the *de rigueur* ladder, yet like many of the *nouveau riche*, never took financial ease for granted.

Rivers' father was no doting provider who lavished furs and jewels upon his princesses, but, rather, treated his family with harsh niggardliness. And just underneath the illusion of elegance Rivers' mother somehow kept up, was the terror of poverty, deprivation and homelessness, common to Eastern European immigrant Jews.

In Rivers the terror lives on. *Enter Talking* documents how she learned to channel her overwhelming fear and insecurity into socially constructive forms of behavior. Releasing childhood pain through receiving audiences' adulation enabled Rivers to satisfy her hunger for attention and security. This power of performance fueled and



Joan Rivers

Photo: Charles Spooner, Courtesy Delacorte Press

continues to be the major force driving Rivers' obsession to succeed.

Jewish feminists who insist that Rivers' performance as a stand-up comic reinforces patriarchal mentalities are not incorrect. Sure she does. Sure Rivers bought into the mainstream and upholds its values. Certainly she could not have achieved stardom had she not tailored her performance persona to the sexist mannequin of TV land.

Understanding that she did so out of the very same Jewish instinct for survival which propelled so many male members of her generation into the legal and medical professions—and stand-up comedy as well—we must view her achievement—though not necessarily her performance—in a more empathetic light.

Until she was 32, Rivers experienced every imaginable form of rejection from an entertainment industry that had no use for females who were not either ingenues or mother-types. Dirt-poor and without familial support, Rivers spent nights in city Y's and periodically lived out of her beat-up 1950 Buick.

She performed in the sleaziest of clubs for the lowest of pay and was sometimes gyped out of that, too. Bombing again and again and again, she nonetheless continued to stand up alone before frequently abusive audiences, and, as all stand-up comics must do, make herself utterly vulnerable.

Enter Talking undoubtedly possesses some self-serving moments; it is, after all, Rivers reporting on Rivers and is thus colored by her unique "take" on the story of her life.

Yet there is more than a grain of truth

"Watching Rivers, women subliminally take in that we can be in charge, we can be earthy and even coarse...."

to the comedienne's success story—obvious to any nice Jewish girl who has stopped aspiring to be the doctor's wife, and dared to hear the sound of her own voice.

I, for one, am glad that Rivers chose not to follow the Mrs. Westchester Great Man's Wife route which she saw as her only other option. I am grateful for the story of struggle, persistence and eventual victory which *Enter Talking* chronicles.

Young Jewish women currently performing the comedy club circuit talk about their own lives from a similar perspective. While many find Rivers' performance persona objectionable and the content of her humor vulgar, they nonetheless appreciate her having broken down the doors barring women's entrance into comedy.

Comedy is a powerful weapon, requiring highly developed verbal skills, a sharp mind, and the courage to speak the unspeakable. Capturing and sustaining viewers' interests is an aggressive, controlling, unlady-like thing to do.

The rare woman who capably performs stand-up comedy gives spectators an image of female strength, regardless of the sexist or non-sexist slant of her material.

Watching Rivers, women subliminally take in that we *can* be in charge, we *can* be earthy and even coarse—no longer must we restrict ourselves to dainty circumscribed "feminine" behavior.

And watching Rivers speak the truth of her reality as she sees it, we come to believe in the power of women's voices—regardless of what we think of their words.□

Celia Y. Weisman, formerly an educator and director of the Jewish Women's Resource Center, now works at the Muscular Dystrophy Association. She is writing a book on Jewish female stand-up comics.

Funny and Feminist Too



Lotus Weinstock



Emily Levine

BY JUDY ROSENFELD

One of the nicest things about comedienne Lotus Weinstock and Emily Levine is the utter lack of hostility in their acts. Unlike the sometimes meanness of Joan Rivers, or the all too common victim shtick humor of Phyllis Diller, Weinstock's and Levine's humor is brainy yet kind. A sense of humor with a sense of consciousness. These women are, in fact, part of a blossoming group of female comics who will not make their brains or beauty the butt of their jokes.

It's easy to see why Levine and Weinstock have become close over the years—they met at the Comedy Store, a major Los Angeles comedy club where both perform regularly—and enjoy performing back to back for the same audiences. Their material and approach, though certainly flavored with their distinct personalities, are both rife with political and feminist allusions. Emily says:

"Both our acts are very political. We may not talk about politics per se, but we talk about the politics of relationships, the politics of good and evil. It's definitely from a Jewish feminist point of view. The message we want to give is strongly anti-racist, pro-peace, pro-reason, and pro-love."

Weinstock and Levine attributed the political/feminist tone of their material

to their strong Jewish identities. Being a Jewish woman comedian is not as difficult as it may seem, they say. "Personally," Weinstock says, "I think it's the easiest thing for a Jewish woman to be! You can say whatever you want as dynamically as you want. You get admiration and you make people feel good. I have a line, 'Since the Jewish people have so many comics, why doesn't Israel have a laughing wall?'"

Because of their identification with Judaism, she adds, "We both have a tremendous consciousness not to be self-loathing or in any way perpetuate stereotypes."

Certainly one of the most common stereotypes and targets for laughs is the "J.A.P."—the Jewish American Princess. Once, a man in Levine's audience called her a J.A.P. She remembers it well.

"I said to him, 'You know, it so incenses me to hear that, because it denigrates Jews and Japanese, and that means the only people to have come out of World War Two smelling like a rose are the Germans!'" In silencing the heckler, Levine also earned herself laughter and applause from the audience.

It was, in fact, during a five-week visit to Germany that Levine developed a sense of her own Jewish identity. Assigned there to write a German situation comedy, Levine noticed that the biographies of Nazi leaders were getting a great deal of media attention. This added to her sense of isolation.

Back in New York, Levine decided to purge the experience the best way she knew how: on stage. Referring to Nazi Germany's attitude toward Jews, Levine commented to her audience about a Jewish woman: "Oh, she's cute as a

button...or would she be cute as a button?"

As both friends and colleagues, Weinstock and Levine periodically test lines on one another to insure that no material is offensive. They worked themselves into a state of high anxiety before one performance where the audience turned out to be predominantly elderly Jews, worried that some of the sexual, political and Jewish themes in their acts might offend their listeners.

Laughing at the memory, Levine says, "I found out later that one old man said to an old woman next to him, 'I hope they're dirty!' And she said to him, 'I hope they're feminists!'"

Levine has not always had an easy time owning up to her intelligence on stage, but recently has used it as a sharp tool in her act. One night, while she was playing at a Los Angeles club, a man in the audience said that she reminded him of his mother. Levine retorted, "Why? Did your mother go to Harvard too?"

Levine, after graduating Harvard with honors, dubbed spaghetti Westerns in Rome and later taught disturbed children in New York before joining an improvisational group, the New York City Stickball Team.

Her appetite for performance whetted, she left the Team to write a one-woman show, appropriately titled, "Myself, Myself, I'll Do It Myself," which she performed at the Improvisation in New York. Among the many fans to discover her was Jack Rollings, manager of such comedy giants as Woody Allen, Mike Nichols and Elaine May. Rollins and other friends encouraged Levine to concentrate on stand-up comedy.

For Weinstock, on the other hand, the choice of comedy as a career option was clear from an early age. She sold her first joke for \$10 to Milton Berle when she was five. She was the bunk clown at camp, a natural performer. When she misbehaved, Lotus (then called Marlena) was punished by not being allowed to watch *The Milton Berle Show* and *I Love Lucy* on Tuesday nights.

Emily and Lotus have cultivated their Jewish identities more and more over the past few years, and have been studying Torah with a U.C.L.A. Hillel rabbi. Weinstock says, "We're very Midrashic in our approach. We have questions: How can we survive and not be bitter, and still love? We search for equality and fairness. This sense of purpose was kindled for me when I was in Israel. I was surrounded by people who were asking important questions."

"I've always gone for the most holistic experience I can. I want to be as enlightened and understanding and loving as I can be, and I like to sprinkle insights along the way. Every piece of my act is a breadcrumb from the path of my experience." □

Judy Rosenfeld is a former member of the JSPS Governing Board.

SHE FOUGHT BACK — An Interview with Vilna Partisan Vitke Kempner

"Partisans of Vilna" is the first documentary on the Holocaust to focus on Jewish resistance against the Nazis. Produced by Aviva Kempner (no relation to Vitke Kempner) and directed by Josh Waletzky ("Image Before My Eyes"), the 130-minute film premiered in New York City in September 1986.

The film is a sensitive and powerful interweaving of interviews with more than three dozen former partisans and witnesses from Vilna—among them Israeli poet Abba Kovner, a founder of the partisan movement and author of the first call for Jewish resistance—and rare photographs and documents, including footage of partisan activity in the White Russian forests.

This call led to formation of the *Fareynikte Partizaner Organizatsie* (United Partisans Organization), the FPO, in January 1942.

Vitke Kempner, interviewed in the following pages, was a leader in the FPO and a partisan in the forests. She committed the first known act of sabotage by a Jew against the Nazis in Eastern Europe. Kempner, who is married to Abba Kovner, lives today in Israel, in Kibbutz En HaChosh. —Rochelle Saidel

BY AVIVA CANTOR

LILITH: Where were you living and what were you doing at the time the Second World War broke out in 1939?

VITKE KEMPNER: I was 19 years old when the war broke out. Before this, I was a student at Warsaw University, at the institute for Jewish studies connected to the university.

LILITH: And before university...?

V.K.: I was born in Kalish. It is not far from the German-Polish border. I go to a Jewish high school in Kalish and studied ten hours a week Hebrew and Jewish history and *Tanach* (Bible and Prophets). After high school, I go to the university in Warsaw, and I join organization of students connected with Hashomer Hatzair (the Socialist Zionist pioneering youth movement—Ed.). It is called Avuka.

In 1939, when I was on vacation in Kalish, broke out the war. September 1st.

I was maybe two months in Kalish, and then the Germans decided to [deport] all the Jews because Kalish was a border town, so they wanted it to be in the Reich. One night, they gather all the Jews in one empty church, and from there, they [deported] them to Warsaw district. But when they brought me to the church together with my family, I cannot stand it, and I escape already the first night.

LILITH: How did you escape?

V.K.: Through the window. I jumped with two, three boys, and we escaped. Our direction was to go to Vilna, because

Aviva Cantor, Editor of LILITH, authored the critique of the TV mini-series "Holocaust" in issue #5.



Jewish partisans at liberation: Standing R. to L.: Vitke Kempner, unidentified man,

ESCAPE AND RESISTANCE, JULY - DECEMBER 1943



Martin Gilbert 1982
from *The Macmillan
Atlas of The
Holocaust*,
(N.Y., 1982).



Rushka Korczak, Abba Kovner.
(Photo courtesy Ciesla Found.)

we heard that Vilna is a free city [under the Lithuanians].

And at this time, there was *aliya* (emigration to Palestine). Many students, families, have certificates for Palestine, and many people went. Thousands [of] Hashomer Hatzair [members] came to Vilna from all over Poland because from there was a way to Palestine. Many older *chaverim* (members) went. There was a *Hanhaga Elyona* (Central Committee) in Vilna.

Abba Kovner was the head of the *Hanhaga Elyona*. Abba had a certificate. I also had a certificate, but I did not go, because the Hashomer Hatzair decided that some people had to stay in Vilna and be together with the youngest people. I was 20, but I was the oldest among others! It sounds funny, but it was like this. Abba and me and Rushka, we are the oldest.

LILITH: Who is Rushka?

V.K.: Rushka Korczak was a very important person in the movement. We are together all the time—before the ghetto, in the ghetto, in the partisans, and now in Israel. We understand each other. She is my best friend.

LILITH: Where did you live?

V.K.: We live in a kibbutz (commune) there. We have 600 people [in Hashomer, living in] many kibbutzim, not one. We work there and prepare ourselves for Israel. But after [the Soviets took control of Vilna in June, 1940], the Zionist movement was not allowed. They [broke up] all the kibbutzim. [In June 1941], they arrest the people from Hashomer Hatzair, and send them to Siberia, and these were the ones who survived. If they know of someone, like me, that I have a certificate for Palestine, they look for me and want to arrest me. So I escaped from Vilna to Slonim, a very little *shitl* (townlet), in the Russian zone.

LILITH: How did you escape?

V.K.: I run away all the night. They look for me all the night, because the Soviets always arrested in the night. And so, I go on the train... I was in Slonim several weeks. And then the war broke out. [Germany invaded the Soviet Union, June 21, 1941.] The Germans come in, and from the first days, they exterminated Jews.

So I decided, if the Germans are in Slonim and they are in Vilna, then I'll go back to Vilna. And is now the question of how I go back to Vilna—it is a real question, how you go back to Vilna! Because it is war, it was all occupied by Germans, and they did not allow Jews even to go out on the streets. They have to have the yellow star.

[Once] there was something decided, I do. I decide to go to Vilna, I go. I did not think *how* to go. I went on a train with German soldiers. They go to the Eastern front. It was very dark in the night. One officer asked me, "You are [Russian Orthodox]?" "No." "You are Protestant?" "No." "You are Catholic?" "No." "Are you a Jew?" "Yes!"

It was so! I was so stupid that I say I am a Jew... And I understand it is very bad for me, so I jumped out from the window of the train, because if not, I'll be finished. And I walk some ways to Vilna. It was not very far.

I come to Vilna in another day, and I saw—I never forget—nobody. It was an empty city. The Jews were not walking on the street. I came very late, eight, nine o'clock, was evening when I came. All the *chaverim* think that I was *meshugganah*.

LILITH: What had been happening...?

V.K.: We call it the *khapunes*—the Germans capture people on the street and take most of them to Ponar (a clandestine mass murder site near Vilna where 33,000 Jews were murdered

between July and November, 1941—Ed.) [But] then, nobody knows of Ponar. Nobody knows where the people are being taken away to. Some of them really were taken to work camps and they write letters. It was a system for deceiving people.... We began from the first day of the war to look for hiding places for our *chaverim* outside Vilna.

Abba was [hiding] in a convent (five miles from Vilna). There were eight nuns, and there were maybe 20 Jews there.

LILITH: How did Hashomer find that convent?

V.K.: Hashomer was connected before the war with the Polish Scout Movement. And a very brave Polish woman, Irene Adamowicz, came from Warsaw to Vilna [as a courier] and connected with another Scout named Jadwiga Dudziec. The Scouts were very nationalistic, and they connected us with the convent.

The Mother Superior from the convent, Anna Borowska, was a very special woman. It was a danger for them; in the end, the [Germans] arrest her and they [deport] all the convent to Germany.

[In September 1941] the Germans brought the Jews into a ghetto. They brought Jews from all over the city to an [area] from which other Jews had already [been taken out to Ponar]. Ghetto Vilna was very little, six little blocks. The houses were two, three stories. And they bring in 20,000 people there.... So they packed you in houses. They pack in one apartment—two bedrooms, and [another] room, and one kitchen—maybe 25, 30 people together. One kitchen was for four, five families. In every apartment there are three, four beds, maybe a chair (what remained from the property of Jews taken away from those apartments after looting by non-Jews and government officials—Ed.).

In the ghetto we live in a commune, 18, 20 [people], mostly Hashomer Hatzair. All of the commune were in two rooms. We lived in one room maybe ten people. Some people are sleeping in the beds, some on the floors.

We have a [community], something very special, and we work for our values.

LILITH: Was there equality between men and women?

V.K.: Yes.

LILITH: Did people become romantically involved with each other?

V.K.: Yes, this also. It was a regular life. [The] two years was such a terrible time, but we were young people.... We lived on discussions. We have many discussions—ideology, what to do about the group, all the time speaking, about



after the war we are speaking and discussing, and about Israel.

Then we decided someone is to go out to the city, outside the ghetto, to be a courier with the cities, with Polish people and Jewish people, to know what to do.... I was sent outside the ghetto, I was not alone, I remember another girl, too....

In work for Hashomer Hatzair, the woman was special. You know, it is important to stress here that the part of the woman was very, very important. It is easier for a woman to go in the streets and to be [unrecognized as a Jew], and also the Germans did not suspect the woman can be [doing illegal work]. All the really dangerous things, the woman did.

The role of women was very important during the war, not only in the ghetto, [but] in every place. Most of the men were taken away by the Germans in the beginning, and the women have to worry about the children, about *parnassa* (making a living). There was no choice.

You never know how can you be in different conditions. I was young, I was 19 years old, I know nothing about life.

When I decided to escape [to Vilna], my father told me, "How can you go? You don't know anything, you don't even know how to wash the dishes. How can you dare go out in the world?" And he was very nervous about it, because I didn't know and he didn't know what can I do when I am in terrible [situations]. You have many forces in you hidden you don't know about.

LILITH: Where outside the ghetto did you live?

V.K.: I was in a convent also, but an open convent. There are closed convents and open convents. Abba was in a closed convent. Closed convent, nobody goes out and nobody goes in. I was in a convent that was open, you can meet there and go out and go in, and there are [laypersons] who live there. They accepted me as a Catholic. We lived in one room, a woman and a child, and I was her governess, it was my disguise.

And to me come Hashomer people from Warsaw, from Bialystok, from Grodno.—I was like a center for all the underground activities: Hashomer sent people to Warsaw, and from Warsaw they come to us. I was also a courier



between people who hid in the convent, from the convent to the ghetto, from the ghetto to other people.

That is the first month. After that, when we saw what goes on, Abba wrote the first Call for Action [December 1941], for uprising against the Germans. And we decided that all people from Hashomer Hatzair who are hidden go back to the ghetto. Because our mind was, if [this] is the destiny of the Jewish people, we have no right to save ourselves. If all the people are in the ghetto, we have to be in the ghetto, and to prepare for action.

When I speak with the Mother Superior she says, "If you go there, I must go with you." It is very touching. And I go with her all the way to the ghetto. But the police [at the gate] did not allow her to enter the ghetto; they say, "You are not a Jew." She later brought Abba the first grenade for fighting.

LILITH: When Abba wrote the Call for Action—"Let Us Not Be Led Like Sheep To Slaughter"—did he have information about what had happened in other cities?

V.K.: Nothing. He said, "It cannot be that

the Germans decided to exterminate only the Jews in Vilna. If they do it, they decided to do it in all the places, [and] maybe we are the first ones. And there will be thousands [more]."

The Jews did not believe us. The Germans developed a system of deception before they brought the Jews to Ponar. The people don't know. And then for two years it was quiet. So the people say, "You see, all the people live. You speak about extermination, and you see, nothing happens."

And in the last three weeks of the ghetto [September 1943], there were no uprisings, because the Germans say, "We take the Jews to Estonia."—It is the same system—and then come letters from Estonia... The Jews say, "You are young, you don't understand what living is."

Maybe because we have no families, most of us, we have more open minds—because we are young, we were 20, 21, 22, 18, 17.

LILITH: Abba's Call for Action led to the formation of the FPO, the United Partisans Organization, in Vilna on January 21, 1942. In Vilna at the time there were about 40, 50 Hashomer people. There were also people from other political parties. How was the FPO organized?

V.K.: In every little unit of five members were people from all the parties—one from Hashomer, one from [Jewish Labor] Bund, one from Revisionists, and so forth.

LILITH: This is very different from Warsaw where the ZOB [Jewish Fighting Organization] was organized in groups—of Hashomer, of Bund, etc.

V.K.: In Vilna, no.

LILITH: Why not?

V.K.: Because we were so dedicated, and we saw the most important thing was the uprising. We did not think about other things. For us, it was the only idea we have.

The Warsaw Ghetto began in 1939. So they had three years of regular life. Until 1942 they live regular lives; it was bad, but the [Germans] don't kill people. But in Ghetto Vilna, it begins from the first day—the bloodshed... If you are up against death, the party is not important, only the one thing, the one idea: the uprising. If only one idea, you have not to be in separate parties. Therefore the groups were very unified. We did not think about anything else, only about the uprising. Our life was only this. We don't go to the theater, we don't read books. Our life was identical with the ideal.

LILITH: What actions did the FPO engage in?

V.K.: Most of the movement was about sabotage and organizing and preparation

for the [uprising].... We also send people to Warsaw and Bialystok to persuade them that all the Jews will be killed.

LILITH: Did they believe?

V.K.: In the beginning, no. It takes time.... We decided to send people to other places, too—to Grodno, to Kovno, many places. We send Chaika Grossman back to Bialystok to establish there an uprising movement [early in 1942].

LILITH: What kind of sabotage did the FPO do?

V.K.: It was one of the first [acts of] sabotage. Planning the sabotage goes on for a long time before, because I had to look for a place on the railroad (the Vilna-Vileyka line going to the front—Ed.). And the Jews work on the railroads—cleaning, bringing food, digging. The Jews work in every place. I have to find a place where are no Jews, because if it will succeed and they found out that Jews were working there, they can exterminate the ghetto.

The hardest work of all the sabotage was to look for the place. For three days I go every day and look for a place. And it was dangerous. If the Germans [caught me], they would exterminate me at once.

Every day I have to put on the yellow star, and go out with the people to work. The Jews always go together with German [guards] to work, 40, 50 [people]. There were some women, for cleaning, for simple work. And I go together with the work [group] at six, seven o'clock in the morning. And I go back into the ghetto the same way—wait for a group, sneak into the group and go back, five o'clock in the evening.

I was two nights alone in the forest by the trains, to watch when the train goes, what are the hours. And then I have to find out the way to come back after the sabotage to the ghetto, not close to the peasant houses, [so] that the dogs will not listen, and the Germans do not see me.

It was two, three o'clock in the night. I go and I look for a way. I see a forest, a little forest, and I think it is a good place to go through the forest. I go in and I hear shooting, a shot here and a shot there. So I understand I am trapped—many, many Germans around me, and I'm in the middle. It was a firing range for training German soldiers.

I decided I will be a stupid woman. I go first to the Germans; I say, "You know, I was mistaken, I don't know how to get out. Please tell me how to get out." I cried. "I don't know where to go, I'm so afraid, please do me a favor." So they get me out. They even send one soldier with me.

LILITH: When you finally found a place to put the mine, how did you do it?

V.K.: We take the bomb, the mine,

outside the ghetto and bring it to the place. We were two—one boy who was a policeman, our [undercover] policeman, I was the other one. We went out in a group of workers [The place] was 15 kilometers [outside] the city.

We take the bomb and we put it under the rail tracks. One-thirty at night (the night of July 8, 1942), we put the bomb. We escaped very quickly. When the train goes [over it] at two, it explodes, and from far away we heard the explosion. We come back to the ghetto. Six o'clock we are in the ghetto, [when] they let in [a group of] people who come after the nightwork.

LILITH: Did the Jews in the ghetto know that this was a Jewish act of sabotage?

V.K.: No. Jews didn't. Nobody knew. Only us... If the Germans will know there is an underground they would exterminate the ghetto... But in all our units, we stand together and we speak about it, and we are very proud about it...

LILITH: Was it after this that Hirsh Glik wrote, in your honor, the song "*Shtil Di Nacht*" ("The night is still and bright with stars/There is a burning frost./ Do you remember how I taught you/To hold a gun in your hand?")?

V.K.: Yes.

LILITH: When you fought in the forests from September 1943 to July 1944 (when Vilna was liberated), how many Jewish partisans were there?

V.K.: In the Rudniki Forest, 600, maybe a thousand. There are four Jewish groups. There are also a Lithuanian group, a Polish group, and a Russian group. Our forest was the only place where Jews were fighting as Jews.

Most of the Jewish partisans were not Hashomer Hatzair, and were not young movement *chaverim*. From Hashomer Hatzair, maybe were 20. And from 20, there maybe were four, five boys, and all the others were girls.

LILITH: Of all the Jewish partisans in your forest, how many were women?

V.K.: I think 30 percent, 40 percent.

LILITH: Were there any children?

V.K.: No. But we have some 14 year-olds, two older-age children. At 16, they were already soldiers.

LILITH: Did any women get pregnant?

V.K.: Yes. But it was strictly forbidden to be pregnant. There was even punishment. Because there were no conditions for pregnant women. But for one of us, it happened. She delivered the baby—after the war.

LILITH: How did you prevent pregnancies?

V.K.: People were careful...

LILITH: What did women do in the partisans?

V.K.: The function of women in the partisans was harder than in the underground. The women in the partisans, in our group, they fought terribly to go out, to fight. Nobody wants to come and not to fight. And they were all capable to fight.

And I remember the first day. Our girls wanted to be fighters like the boys, and the boys did not want to go with women. They say, "No, you are a woman, you are not prepared, you can't do it, you get upset, you are weak, you cannot go." In our group, Abba was the Commander. If not [for] Abba, no woman would be a fighter. It was he who demanded that in every action has to be one woman. [Ours] is the only group where women are very active. It was our wish, we come to fight, not to sit and to cook. So the girls went once in some weeks [and were] better than the men... The women were very important in the partisans, because the couriers were women.

LILITH: What was your main work?

V.K.: I was in intelligence and scouting. I was the only woman in all of the forest who was an intelligence scout. There were only five scouts. I was the commander of the little group of five scouts. We go out every day, to look for good places to make sabotage; to work for espionage, to seek information from the peasants, to find out where are the Germans stationed, what are they doing; to know all the good ways through the forest, to know how to go, not to come close to the Germans.

Every day I make 40 miles on foot. In winter, in hard winter. I go all the time alone. By night, by day, alone, all the time alone. Many times I was very frightened. You don't know where the Germans are, you don't know which peasant is good, which is not. It was frightening.

Once I go to Vilna for some sabotage action. I come back and the snow was one-half meter high (about 16 inches—Ed.). And I did not recognize the way, I don't know where to go—south, east. And I cannot make mistake because the Germans were in all the places. I saw the forest, but I don't know how to get there. I saw from far away partisans... They told me how to go... I was from town, I don't know all the things from the woods. And they say to me very important thing, that in the woods, on the north side of the trees grows the moss, and it helps me, because I know where I am.

LILITH: Did you bring out Jews from the ghetto?

V.K.: It is what I think is my most important job, to bring Jewish people to the forest. Not only me; Zelda Trager, Chaika Lazar, Dina Kagan. I think, if I am

proud about something I do, I am proud that I did this.

LILITH: How did you do it?

V.K.: I'll tell you [about the last group I brought out in mid-October, 1943]. One night, we go from the forest, four people, two girls and two boys. The other girl, Chaika Lazar, went with me to put bombs [to blow up] the transformers in Vilna. On the way back, I brought [out] 60 Jews. After the liquidation of the Vilna ghetto [September, 1943], there was a place, Kailis, [where there] were some thousand Jews, for work... We organized them. Burak is the Commander there, he organizes them and they go out, as if going to night-work. I met them outside the city, I know the way, and I brought them to the forest.

LILITH: I remember from the film that the non-Jewish partisans didn't like the fact that you were bringing Jews out.

V.K.: On the way, I get the message not to bring Jews, but I decided, I bring Jews. What can they do with me?

LILITH: What did they do?

V.K.: Nothing. I brought them. And they say that they will be the last ones, no more Jews can be accepted in the woods, [not] even one Jew. They can't stand that there are 600 Jews, that's enough as it is.

LILITH: Did you ever get into any shooting battles with the Germans?

V.K.: Yes, but not much. The work of the partisans is not shooting the Germans, but to make sabotage of railroads and telephone poles.

LILITH: Were a lot of women killed in the partisans?

V.K.: In my group, two of my best friends were killed.

LILITH: In the film, everybody seemed to say that they expected they were going to die...

V.K.: Because we know that nobody can live in the ghetto and we want to fight, and without hope for victory, for being saved. Death was a fact, always a fact. In the partisans, we think the same: we fight until we die.

Everyone was sure that we will die... You live in the ghetto and your eyes were open, and you see that all the people are gone, most of Jewish people were killed. Other people did not want to believe it, but it was the truth, because the Six Million were dead. We [believed] there would be an uprising in the ghetto, and all the people will die.

In the ghetto, the fighting was enough—without hope [for] victory, only for honor, national and personal honor... We believe that the future will know the story. And you see—40 years after, in New York, you hear the story.

LIFTING THE YOKE

Is There Hope for Ending Jewish Legal Discrimination Against Women?

BY GILA BERKOWITZ



Photo: Francine Zuckerman

Thousands of Jewish women from across the entire religious spectrum convened on Chanukah 5747 (December, 1986) at the First Jerusalem International Conference on Women and Judaism: *Halacha* and the Jewish Woman. Their objective: to improve their position in *halacha*, Jewish law, which, in matters of personal status (marriage, conversion, divorce) is also the law of the land in Israel.

The conference was officially, if gingerly, sponsored by the Israel Ministry of Justice, and primarily organized by Pnina Peli, a vocal and innovative feminist of traditional bent. Lawyers and rabbis were present in some number, but academics—vanguards of experimentation and change in Jewish and Israeli life—carried the day.

Women are chafing under Orthodox Jewish law, and they gathered in Jerusalem to figure out what to do about it, and how. There were, of course, those who were determined to break the authority of the Israel Rabbinate by, for example, establishing secular marriage and divorce in the country. There were others who urged relief by calling for the government to enfranchise alternative authorities, the more liberal branches of Judaism (Reconstructionist, Reform, Conservative), which are more responsive to the demands of feminists.

But the majority of the participants wanted something much more difficult to obtain: the legitimization of women's rights by the Torah Sages themselves—equality as part of the great unbroken chain of Judaism from Sinai itself.

Not only are they unwilling to throw out the baby with the bathwater, they are determined to find some way to drain the tub before the baby catches pneumonia.

Gila Berkowitz, author of *The New Jewish Cuisine* (1986) and numerous articles for American magazines, served as a war correspondent in Israel, taught journalism at Stanford University, and is presently writing a novel in Haifa.

Women's role in traditional religious life was widely discussed. Women's prayer groups, an issue that has inflamed the Orthodox world, are a matter of extreme importance to at least 1,000 women who *daven* (pray) regularly with other women (see *Kol Ishah* #14). Orthodox feminists, for the most part, eschew the goal of equal opportunities in a mixed synagogue, and have been experimenting with praying-as-women. While there are no true *halachic* barriers to such groups, said Rivka Haut, director of the New York-based Women's Tefila Network, established shuls have put up stiff resistance to the practice.

Many of the women at the conference were singularly moved by the experience of praying together with their sisters at the thrice-daily, women-only services.

Equally moving—and illuminating—was a paper by Dr. Susan Sered of Bar Ilan University. Sered had studied a group of impoverished old women in a Bukharan neighborhood in Jerusalem. These women had found a surprising freedom after the death of their husbands to develop their religious and spiritual natures.

How about women as Orthodox rabbis? Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, formerly spiritual leader of Lincoln Square Synagogue, and now rabbi of the West Bank township of Efrat and head of its various Torah institutions—a very influential modern Orthodox rabbi—

sees no reason not to train and ordain them. Alas, he fears that doing so would invite an immediate backlash—to the detriment of more basic and widespread improvements in the Jewish education of women.

A number of scholars used their research in Talmud to light the way for greater rights and participation for contemporary women. Jewish Theological Seminary Talmud Professor Judith Hauptman, and JTS student Susan Grossman—both of whom intend to become Conservative rabbis—showed that women in the Talmudic period were neither as oppressed nor as silent as one would believe from modern interpreters.

The historians shed new light on the women of our past, and gave hope and ammunition to those in the present.

- Assyriologist Tikva Frymer-Kensky of Ann Arbor showed how Hebrew monotheism destroyed the old system in which sexuality and sex differences were paramount. The result was a Biblical age in which women enjoyed public office and personal prominence. Unfortunately, the Greeks, in their time, influenced the Talmudic rabbis to fear women and their supposed sexual powers.

- Professor Livia Bitton-Jackson of the City University of New York emphasized the negative effect of Christian culture in its influence on the *halachic* view of women.

- Professor Leila Bronner of the



Orthodox feminist Leah Shakdiel

University of Southern California reviewed historical precedents in which Jewish women acted as prophets, judges, and financial, spiritual, and political advisors to Jewish communities.

- Dr. Sara Reuger of Brooklyn College, in a paper submitted but not delivered, proposed the theory that the raw needs of survival in a hostile Diaspora forced the Jewish woman to retreat from a position of independence to one of enabler and supporter of males.

Alice Shalvi—head of the Israel Women's Network, an influential professor at the Hebrew University, founder of a radically advanced religious girls' high school, and mother of six—told the women to demand that men become the enablers of Jewish women, as the women have long been theirs. Author Blu Greenberg urged women to fulfill the destiny of strong family life along with that of leadership.

The issue that demanded most of the conference's time, energy and attention was that of *get*, Jewish religious divorce. In Israel, *get* is the only form of divorce permitted to Jews. Because *halacha* stipulates that a man must grant the *get*, when the husband refuses to do so, a woman becomes an *agunah*, an "anchored wife" (plural: *agunot*). Conference participants were told that there are 7,000 *agunot* in Israel today.

New York lawyer Rabbi Irwin Haut presented a *halachic* model for a *takana*, a universally accepted amendment to the body of Jewish law, to enable a religious court to decree a divorce over the objections of the husband. A *takana* in *halacha* is rare but vital (see Blu Greenberg's "Women's Liberation and Jewish Law" in LILITH #1).

Other mechanisms, as well—such as the annulment of a marriage by a rabbinical court when the husband refuses to grant the *get*—were discussed in the course of the three days. Feminist therapist Joyce Rosman Brenner, chairperson of the Status of Women Committee of the Social Workers Union (Igud), expressed the feelings of many in the audience when she said:

"I feel frustrated, angry and disappointed that, if all these mechanisms exist why have we waited so long to have them put into effect?"

Masha Lubelsky, President of Na'amat (the largest women's organization in Israel, one with clout because of its connection with the Histadrut national labor union), warned that the sluggishness of the Rabbinate in dealing with the *get* problem was souring the Israeli population to such an extent that its political position was seriously threatened. The polls show that a majority of Israelis now want marriage and divorce removed from rabbinical jurisdiction, she said.

Rabbi Eliakim Getzel Ellenson, author of the three-volume *Woman and the Commandments* (to appear in English shortly), adjured the assembly to approach the *G'dolei haTorah* (preeminent Orthodox rabbis), despite the distance at which they seem to be from contemporary women's needs and interests. To give up in disgust and bypass these sages, as Conservative and Reform Jews had done, would be to doom the movement.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky took him to task. Women had come from overseas to hear Ellenson's advice and encouragement, not to be sermonized, she protested sharply. Ellenson apologized.

Rabbi Ezra Basri, Chief Justice of the Jerusalem Rabbinical Court, seemed stunned by the hostility of some in the audience. By all accounts one of the finest judges on the rabbinical bench and a man of exceptional kindness and sweet temperament, he counseled the women to patience and absolute trust in the Law of Israel, which had proved so wonderful for so long.

What Rabbi Basri did not take into account was the Charlie-the-Tuna Effect: the women weren't looking for a more compassionate interpretation of the *halacha*, they were looking for interpretation of a more compassionate *halacha*.

The climax of the program was the appearance of the *halachic* women's hero of the day, Leah Shakdiel. Shakdiel is embroiled in a landmark case: her right to serve on the Religious Council—the governmental fiscal and regulatory body in charge of religious agencies' services—of the development town of Yeruham. The right of a woman to hold such a post has put the political and religious establishments in Israel in a major tizzy.

Shakdiel looks like a caricature of the

meek and modest Orthodox woman. But the moment she opened her mouth, righteousness and rightness rang forth, as if from the mouth of a prophet.

"We have changed in the past century," she said. "We live within our time. And now we must inform the rabbis."

Shakdiel called women to arms. Despite the fact that we can't know what the consequences of direct action will be, she said, we must nevertheless take such actions for ourselves. "We must step ahead into the beginning of (what will be) an ongoing struggle." The assembly gave Shakdiel a long standing ovation.

The end of the struggle, Shakdiel's words intimated, was beyond the right of women to stand equal to men in the Law. The end of the struggle is the full development of the Jewish people. As the Sages said of the Exodus from Egypt: Because of the women, Israel was redeemed and because of the women Israel will be redeemed. □

Late in the evening after the end of this conference, a group of us met at the home of Alice Shalvi to discuss how the work of this conference could be continued. On the political front, there was a sense that there was an urgent need to keep the problem of the *agunah* before the public.

Several suggestions were made: one, that a series be prepared on the "Agunah of the week" (or month) in which a profile of an individual "anchored wife" would be given so that these women became people rather than statistics; and 2) that a list be distributed of the names of these women (like the lists of Soviet refuseniks), so that the situation could be inquired about. Anybody who can help in this, or who has some other ideas, should contact Alice Shalvi, the head of the Israeli Womens' Network.

On the scholarly front, there was a great wish to keep the discussion going. It is hoped that a new journal can be started, on "Women and Halachah", as a forum to discuss these issues and a stimulus to research on these topics.

A newsletter to keep people informed about research and writing about Women and Judaism will be edited and disseminated by Hananiah Goodman (editor of a Kabbalah newsletter).

Anybody who would like to receive such a newsletter, or who would like to inform others of articles being published and papers presented, should contact him at 41 Palyam St., Tsameret HaBirah, Jerusalem.

—Tikva Frymer-Kensky

BOOK REVIEW

The Ritual Impulse

MIRIAM'S WELL:
RITUALS FOR JEWISH WOMEN
AROUND THE YEAR

BY PENINA V. ADELMAN
NY: BIBLIO PRESS, 1986

REVIEWED BY TIKVA FRYMER—
KENSKY

The ritual impulse is very strong. Without ritual our ideas float disembodied in the ether, unable to touch our emotions; and our beliefs stay unsupported by action and experience. And, no less important, rituals create community, a sense of unity and belonging with the people with whom we share our rituals, a sense of group identity, and of personal definition as part of this group.

For a long time, women had no access to such ritual communion. Unable to share fully in the public Jewish rituals, they lived their religious lives passively, watching the men say the prayers and read the Torah; domestically, participating in home rituals on Sabbath, Passover, Chanukah and (to a lesser extent) Sukkot; and privately, reciting the Psalms, or books of hours, or the many *techniot*, the Yiddish devotional literature written by and for women.

There are rumors that women also had a shared religious life, for we read mentions of Rosh Chodesh (new moon) feasts of women, and we imagine a ritual content to these occasions and perhaps to such shared experiences as visiting new mothers. But what this content might have been has been lost, and in the modern world all such ritual events disappeared, leaving women bereft of a communal ritual life.

All this has changed in recent years with the appearance of Jewish feminist consciousness. There have been two main thrusts of movement: towards participation in the traditional public liturgy of Judaism, and towards the creation of new women's rituals.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky is Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, teaching Women and Religion. She is currently completing Motherprayer, a book of creative essays and poems toward a theology of birth, to be published by Beacon Press; and The Bible in the Wake of the Goddess, to be published by The Free Press.

Miriam's Well seeks to provide a source book of ideas, rituals, and images to help women form and enjoy women's rituals. In part, it is the record of a liturgical year in the life of the Philadelphia Rosh Chodesh group, and provides ideas on how to form other such groups.

The celebrations in this book seek to create a sacred time for women in which they are free to reinterpret sacred symbol and story, and in which they foster positive images of the female body. Every month, the group meets to hold a special ritual keyed to that month.

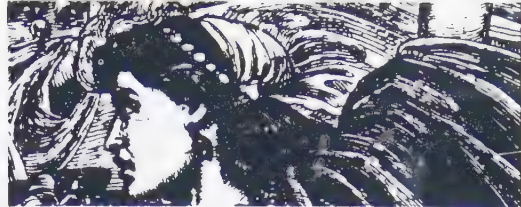
Some months concentrate on the familiar Jewish calendar: the New Year, Chanukah, Tu Beshvat (New Year of the Trees), Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, Tish'a B'Av (fast mourning the destruction of the Temple). Other monthly meetings focus on life cycle events: menarche, marriage, pregnancy, birth, infertility/miscarriage, menopause, mourning. Sometimes the actions taken are traditional: lighting candles, performing *tashlich* (ceremony "casting sins" into the waters), making masks for Purim, but infused with special meaning; and sometimes they are totally different from traditional liturgy: meditations, dances, wailing. There is always song, and the telling of new stories; food, and talk.

The traditional liturgy is hallowed precisely because it is traditional. Although some of us may rebel at certain lines of *Siddur* (prayerbook) that we simply cannot say, for the most part we pay little attention to the words of the prayers: it is the rhythm of the repetition, the always-sameness, the sharing with those present and those long-past, the record of Israel's yearning for God that matters. New rituals cannot count on such an automatic response and, as a result, are to some degree determined by personal taste.

There are some very moving elements to this book. The life-cycle rituals in this book are appealing—they break totally new ground and allow the intensely private to be shared. Through rituals of menarche and menopause, all women feel united. The remembering of the departed, the support offered the pregnant woman, the bathing of the new mother, are moving liturgies: moreover, such occasions open the door to the serious sharing of one's own experiences of one's body.

But some of the rituals in the book seem flat, at least to me.

I cannot participate in a group wailing, though I know that this wailing has been a great ritual for women since the



beginning of history. The zodiac has no meaning for me.

And I would rather say, "*Berucha At Adonai*"—Blessed Are You, O God, using the feminine forms—while saying the proper name of God as it is traditionally pronounced. I do not want to declare that this name and the whole Biblical God it refers to is a male-only image. To address my prayers to a separable female immanent presence of God, the *Shekhinah*, indicates to me that the rest of God is male.

There are other problems. The over-identification of the moon and females is a Jungian psycho-mishmash. The moon has not always been seen as a woman: in ancient Sumer and Babylon, the moon was a male figure, and it was the evening and morning star (the planet Venus) that was believed to be female.

Menstruation may be regulated by pheromones rather than the phases of the moon. Certainly the waxing and waning of the moon calls to mind the changes of a woman's body, but too much lunar meditation goes nowhere.

So, too, does the automatic acceptance of such cultural stereotypes as masculine-active/aggressive and feminine-passive/receptive. There is no passive female in the Bible, and there may be none in any pre-modern Judaic source. What do we gain from adopting current psychological trains of thought as deep sacred Jewish truths?

Such misconceptions go along with a lack of knowledge. There is no great depth of Judaic learning here. The great women studied and remembered are the accessible heroines of the Bible, but we should also be inviting to our feasts some of the lesser known women from all of Jewish history, unsung heroines with voices waiting to be heard.

We should try to find some way of connecting the new women's lifecycle events with traditional Jewish language and symbol so that there is a Judaic value to performing them within a Jewish setting that goes beyond what we might gain from sharing such events in a non-religious or neo-pagan setting.

This is a program of action rather than criticism of this book, which is a very valuable beginning. There is a rich compendium of ritual ideas in this book, so that each new group formed should be able to use it as a springboard for its own ideas. As Jewish tradition teaches, "You are not responsible for completing the task, but neither should you refrain from advancing it." Penina Adelman and her group have documented the beginnings of a major endeavor. □

T S E N A - R E N A

GROUPS AND PROJECTS

Women and Judaism is a group of women who are questioning the relationship of women to Reform Jewish practice. Their aim is to raise awareness among congregations and the movement as a whole of the parameters women come up against when we seek a new definition of ourselves. They are currently working on a project to provide information on "Women and Tallit," and will soon be producing a pamphlet of their findings. Inquiries and suggestions are welcome. Contact:

Barbara Borts
c/o The Manor House
80 East End Road
Finchley
London N.3
England

"Full Moon, Full Life: A Modern Woman's Perspectives on Judaism" is a documentary film project that explores attempts made by Jewish women to reconcile their tradition with feminist ideals. By documenting the rites of passage of a Jewish woman through the various stages of her life, the film will address the challenges and choices she makes. To date, this project is being partially funded by the Quebec government, but additional support is being sought. For further information, write:

Ina Fichman (Producer/Director)
Full Moon Productions
5325 Gatineau Street
Montreal Quebec H3T 1X1
Canada

The Mount Sinai Rape Crisis Intervention Program provides support services for survivors of sexual assault, their families and friends. Over 100 trained volunteer advocates and staff are available for companionship during emergency room procedures. RCIP also has a speakers bureau, which offers educational presentations free of charge. For more information contact:

Mount Sinai Medical Center
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology
and Reproductive Science
One Gustave L. Levy Place
New York NY 10029
(212) 650-5461/5493

Senior Options and Support (SOS) is a community service project sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women,

New York Section, to provide older adults and their children with answers to such questions as the limitations of Medicare, how to choose a nursing home, problems with Social Security, and the like. The Hotline operates from 10 to 1, Monday through Thursday, and may be reached by calling:

(212) 535-5900

EVENTS

The ninth annual National Women's Studies Association conference, "Weaving Women's Colors: A Decade of Empowerment," a conference on the intersection of race and gender, will take place June 24-28, 1987, at Spelman College in Atlanta GA. For more information, contact:

NWSA '87
P.O. Box 21223
Atlanta GA 30322
(404) 727-7845

The Jewish Vegetarians of North America are holding a "Jewish Vegetarian" conference in New York City on May 24, 1987. The conference will include cooking demonstrations as well as samples, and various speakers. For more information, contact:

Jewish Vegetarians of North America
P.O. Box 1463
Baltimore MD 21203
(301) 752-8348

A program in Yiddish is available from the Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies, an associate institute of the University of Oxford. Courses will run from August 3-28, 1987. Enquiries and requests for applications may be directed to:

Ms. Jean Nightingale
Administrative Director
Oxford Programme in Yiddish
Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies
45 St. Giles
Oxford OX1 3LW, England
(0865) 511869

The Feminist Women's Writing Workshops will again be held on the lakeside campus of Wells College, Aurora NY from July 12-24, 1987. This year's guest writer, Diane di Prima, is an experienced teacher, performer, and author of 22 books of poetry and prose. Tuition, private room, and board are included in the fee of \$630 (for non-



"Go and See" or "Seek Enlightenment" is the title of the Yiddish-language Torah for women, with the portion of the week and folk tales. Tsena-Rena was the first resource that enabled women to educate themselves.

resident participants tuition is only \$430). For a detailed brochure and more information, contact:

Katharyn Machan Aal, Director
Feminist Women's Writing Workshops
P.O. Box 456
Ithaca NY 14851
(607) 273-9040

DRAMA, FILM, VIDEO

Among the current Cinema Guild film and video releases are "Breaking the Silence: The Generation After the Holocaust," a documentary by Eva Fogelman which focuses on the experiences of the children of Holocaust survivors. For further information, contact:

The Cinema Guild
1697 Broadway
New York NY 10019

A film by Oren Rudavsky, "Spark Among the Ashes: A Bar Mitzvah in Poland," which follows the story of an American boy's Bar Mitzvah in Crakow and the human drama of religious and social controversy which accompanied it, is available for rental or sale from:

The Filmmakers Library
133 East 58th Street
New York NY 10022

"Zion's Captives," an eight-minute UJA videotape on the plight of the Soviet

Jews, focusing on longtime refusenik Ida Nudel, is cleared for broadcast and available in all formats. Contact:

United Jewish Appeal
99 Park Avenue Rm. 300
New York NY 10016
(212) 818-9100, ext. 366

"Independent Filmmakers: Looking At Ourselves: A Guide to Films Featured in the Jewish Film Festival" is a 61-page paperback listing and describing over 100 new Jewish subject films premiered by the Jewish Film Festival, a Berkeley-based resource center on Jewish film, in 20 cities since its founding in 1981. The illustrated book, edited by Deborah Kaufman and Janis Plotkin—the JFF's Director and Associate Director, respectively—also features short articles on independent film, Holocaust cinema, new Israeli movies, and how to organize a film festival, plus resource listings. The main body of the paperback is devoted to descriptions of films, many of them dealing with Jewish women. These include:

- "Anou Banou: The Daughters of Utopia," (France, 1982). The lives of six pioneers who came to Palestine in the 1920's with Socialist, Zionist, and feminist politics, and their lives today.
- "As If It Were Yesterday," (France-U.S., 1980). Secret network among Belgians in World War II, especially young women, to shelter children.
- "Charlotte," (Holland, 1980). The life, work and loves of artist Charlotte Salomon, who perished in the Holocaust. (Some of her work was featured in LILITH 12/13).
- "Each Other," (Israel, 1980). Love and intimacy between women in present-day Israel.
- "In Her Own Time," (U.S., 1985). Traces the work of anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff (reviewed in LILITH #7) and her exploration of Judaism as her death from cancer approached.
- "Malou," (Germany, 1983). A woman's search for the history of her dead mother, a German Jew abandoned by her husband in Buenos Aires.
- "The Night of the Long Knives," (U.S., 1983). Two women of the Los Angeles punk scene confront punk use of Nazi symbols.
- "The Story of Esther," (U.S., 1977). An 82-year-old woman talks about her life, then and now, on New York's Lower East Side.

Copies of the guide, at \$9.00 each, plus 50 cents postage and handling, can be ordered from:

Jewish Film Festival
2600 10th Street
Berkeley CA 94710

"A Life of Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin, Yiddish Folksinger and

Folklorist," is an excellent resource for *havurot* (study groups), reading circles, synagogues and classrooms. It features the life and work of Dr. Ruth Rubin, an 80-year-old scholar and performer who, over the last 45 years has collected over 2,000 songs from immigrant Jews. This represents the largest collection of Yiddish folksongs in the world compiled by a single individual. In the videotape, Rubin's interpretations of Yiddish folksongs reveal the rich legacy of Eastern European Jewish folk culture. The videotape is available from:

Cindy Marshall Productions
76 Columbus Avenue
Somerville MA 02143
(617) 625-5986

"Dialogue with Leah Shakdiel," a 24-minute video cassette, deals with Shakdiel's ordeal in trying to assume the religious council seat to which she was nominated in Yeroham, a small town in the Negev. It is available for \$9.95 from:

New Israel Fund
111 West 40th Street (Rm 2600)
New York NY 10018

"Miriam's Daughters Now" is a 29-minute video cassette by Lilly Rivlin documenting attempts by Jewish feminists to rethink rituals which have excluded them in the past. The video includes three ceremonies: the Rosh Hashana ritual of *Tashlich*—the discarding of one's sins; a feminist seder that reexamines the Biblical Exodus story with regard to modern issues and concerns; and a baby-naming ceremony conducted by the newborn's parents, both of whom are rabbis. The video cassette is available from:

El Ar Films
463 West Street (#510A)
New York NY 10014

"Salt of the Earth," the unique classic popularized by thousands of 16mm showings by women's groups during the 1970's, is now available on high quality VHS and Beta. The only film blacklisted during the McCarthy era, it poignantly portrays the true story of a Chicana's political awakening during a 1950's zinc mine strike in New Mexico. The tape is available from:

Voyager Press
2139 Manning Avenue
Los Angeles CA 90025
(800) 446-2001

A new film directed by Lorraine Gray, "The Global Assembly Line," which follows with detail and intimacy the lives of working women and men in the "free trade zones" of developing countries, is available from:

New Day Films
22 Riverview Drive
Wayne NJ 07470-3191

Centre Productions, Inc., and Rustad/Wickham Video will release "Self-Defense for Women," a 90-minute videotape designed to teach women of all ages strategies and exercises for self-defense. For more information, contact:

Bonnie White
Centre Productions, Inc.
1800 30th Street, Suite 207
Boulder, CO 80301

"Golda Meir: 'A Woman of Valor'" is a dramatic presentation with music about the life, times and character of Golda Meir, as portrayed by Sascha Garson. Garson's career as a character actress spans community theater in her native New York City, Mexico, and currently in San Diego. She has dramatized the problems of women, the elderly, and the stigmatized mentally ill by organizing the Sascha Garson Mobile Theater, and the Plays for Living touring company sponsored by the Jewish Family Service. For more information, or to book this program, contact:

Golda
1318 Felton Street
San Diego, CA 92102
(619) 239-0108

PUBLICATIONS

B'nai B'rith Women has published "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women," a booklet that gives an overview of the United Nations treaty on this issue. Single copies of the booklet are available free of charge, and additional copies are 75 cents each. Send requests to:

B'nai B'rith Women
1640 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Washington DC 20036

Two collections of works by the celebrated Yiddish poet Rachel Korn have been translated by friends of the National Yiddish Book Center. For more information, contact:

The National Yiddish Book Center
P.O. Box 969
Amherst MA 01004

B'nai B'rith Women is offering a child care booklet, giving guidelines for selecting quality day care. To obtain a copy of the booklet, send \$2 to:

B'nai B'rith Women
1640 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20036

The Legal Committee of the Chicago Chapter of the American Jewish Committee has published a pamphlet on the legal and social implications of a religious Jewish divorce, "get." For a copy of the pamphlet, "Divorce and Jewish Law," send a SASE to:

American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York NY 10022

"Feed the World," a teacher's guide to helping students understand the Jewish perspective on world hunger, is a publication of the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education. "Feed the World" contains a series of lesson plans designed to help students clarify their own thinking about the hunger problem and plan a course of action for their personal participation in the effort to alleviate it. It also contains a list of books, films, and filmstrips on world hunger, as well as a list of organizations that deal with the subject. For information, contact:

CAJE
468 Park Avenue South
New York NY 10016
(212) 696-0740

For a number of years, the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) has had an active Jewish Caucus, which has worked hard to increase awareness of Jewish issues and to develop Jewish programming. At the 1986 NWSA conference in Urbana, IL, approximately 600 women attended the plenary session entitled "Jewish Women's Voices: Diversity and Community." A tape of the plenary is available for \$6 from:

NWSA
University of Maryland
College Park MD 20074

Heritage, a newsletter published quarterly by the Illinois Ethnic Consultation, an organization sponsored largely by the American Jewish Committee, is publishing a special issue on ethnic women. This special issue will deal with problems faced by ethnic women in maintaining traditions which often come into sharp conflict with the modern world in which they live. For a review copy of the special issue of *Heritage*, contact:

Heritage News Service
55 East Jackson Blvd.
Chicago IL 60604

In celebration of the renewal of the Statue of Liberty, and in honor of the famous poem by Emma Lazarus which graces it, Biblio Press is offering an Emma Lazarus poster: 18" x 24" on heavy stock, in full color, with her poem. The posters can be ordered from:

Biblio Press
P.O. Box 22
Fresh Meadows NY 11365

CALLS FOR MATERIALS

Earthwise Review is sponsoring the Anne Frank Youth Award for Poetry, a children's poetry competition. Prizes will be certificates of merit awarded to both the child and to the school the child attends. Please specify grade, age of student, name on each entered page, address, name of school, and name of teacher. An adult must sign each completed entry. Entries shall be judged on neatness, form, content and overall poetic talent as determined by the judge. Form is poet's choice, and there is no entry fee. Send entries by August 31, 1987, to:

Contest Editor
c/o *Earthwise Review*
P.O. Box 680-536
Miami FL 33168

For a history of Jewish cookbooks, anyone with manuscripts and printed books, in any language, as well as women's magazines and other popular periodicals for or read by Jewish women that dealt with food, domestic science, housekeeping, etc, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or information on others working on this or related topics, please contact:

Dr. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
231 Bowery
New York NY 10002

For research on the personal writings of Jewish women, diaries and journals—Grandma's from the attic, or yours from last week—are needed. Anonymity guaranteed, if desired. For more information, or to make arrangements, call collect:

Laurie Simon Goldman
(513) 351-4686

For a "New Jewish Rituals" book, the editors are seeking new life-cycle rituals for birth, non-birth events (e.g. infertility, miscarriage, abortion), growing up, approaching adulthood, aging, death and dying, and "ageless" rituals (e.g. undertaking political action, celebrating significant friendships, *aliyah*). Contact:

Rabbi Linda Holtzman/Deborah Zucker
635 Westview Street
Philadelphia PA 19119
(215) 848-1963

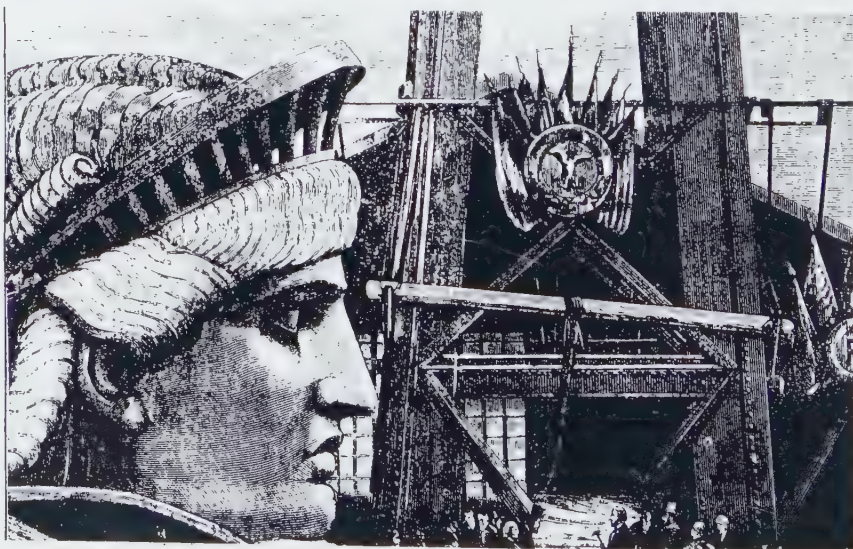
The Hall Center for the Humanities is seeking material for a book on women in prison and alternatives to incarceration. Submissions may be sent to:

Kristine Furlough
Center for Humanistic Studies
University of Kansas
211 Watkins Home
Lawrence KS 66045-2967
(913) 864-4798

Work has resumed on the Hashomer Hatzair Archives, which will be a unique resource, enabling *shomrim* and professional researchers to recreate the past through photographs, documents, correspondence, and personal histories. If you have photos or documents, if you have completed or would like to write (or tape) a memoir of your movement years, if you have the names and addresses of *shomrim*, contact:

Joni-Sue Blinderman
Hashomer Hatzair
150 Fifth Avenue
New York NY 10011
(212) 255-8760

Tsena Rena was written by Elizabeth Lichtenstein.



Continued from page 3

had raised my children in was against these implications because he did not think women should be trained to be independent of men for protection. It would have been irresponsible for me not to make the data I had available.

In *Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies* we have an appendix containing all the women studied, with the relevant demographics including ethnicity. We also have an index by case number. I encourage those of you who are interested in exploring this issue further to make a list of Jewish women's case numbers and learn their stories by looking them up in the book. But I particularly encourage others to build on this exploratory study as well as upon Diana Russell's study, so that we can have a larger data base and thus refine our analysis.

In sisterhood,
Pauline B. Bart

Mikvah—Feminist Mitzvah

Dear LILITH:

I was very interested in your recent article on *mikvah* (ritual bath necessary before a religiously observant woman can resume sexual relations after her menstrual period) ("Reclaiming the Waters #15), though my perspective is very different from that of Rabbi Elyse Goldstein.

Mikvah always seemed to me to be the most "feminist" of *mitzvot*, once it is freed from the idea of the menstrual taboo and interpreted within a feminist context, albeit within a heterosexual marriage as well.

Mikvah stresses familiarity with one's own body because of the importance of attention to the menstrual cycle. One is forced to get in touch with one's rhythms and cycles, discharges and fertility—"my body/myself," so to speak. And, although Rabbi Goldstein's experience was apparently enhanced by her friends' presence, the privacy in which most women observe *mikvah* can heighten the spiritual aspect of this most physical *mitzvah*—that of each woman's relationship to God.

Because a *mikvah* is a uniquely female place and a uniquely female *mitzvah*, it creates a community of Jewish women, an instant sisterhood. Each woman who observes *mikvah*, from the Chassidic to the most "modern," is linked not only to her contemporaries, but to her foremothers and descendants as well.

Celibacy, which has received much



Photo: Lori Grinker

recent attention (by Germaine Greer, among others) is also an aspect of *mikvah* which can be viewed positively. Enforced celibacy for part of each month can refresh and intensify a resumed sexual relationship, particularly among long-married couples.

Our *mikvah*, at 71-11 Vleight Place, Queens, NY, is not run by "male rabbis with...their own denominational territories to protect." It is run by the women of the community with the help and support of rabbis and laymen, who reject "sheitl (wig) advertisements" as appropriate waiting-room literature and instead have a library and information on breast self-examination. We also offer educational programs on Jewish issues as well as women's and health issues.

While Rabbi Goldstein's ideas and innovations are interesting, and I hope she is successful in her quest to "take back the water," some of us find deep meaning in *mikvah* the way it is and has always been.

Rabbi Goldstein's tone and hostility to the Orthodox is somewhat offensive, and I hope she can open her mind enough to see both her way and ours as meaningful forms of religious expression.

Renee Septimus
Jamaica Estates NY

Dear LILITH:

Elyse Goldstein's article on the *mikvah* is the best statement on that much misunderstood institution since the one

published almost 20 years ago by Rachel Adler.

Rabbi Goldstein proposes that women take over the *mikvah* and make it over into a uniquely feminine institution. I think this idea can go a step further. Since men also use the *mikvah*, especially as part of their spiritual preparation for Shabbat, a visit to the *mikvah* could become a way of making a connection with the female aspects of Judaism.

Just as many women may feel that they are making use of masculine traditions in the synagogue, men using the *mikvah* can somehow be given the experience of a better understanding of the feminine through *kavannot* or in some other way.

The practice of this kind of very physical spirituality might find a new role in Judaism among non-Orthodox men and might have a salutary effect in increased understanding between Jewish men and women.

Rabbi Philip J. Bentley
Temple Or-Elohim
Jericho NY

Corrections

Information in the fourth paragraph of "Remembering Laura Z. Hobson" (issue #15) should have been attributed to *Publisher's Weekly*, September 2, 1983. The publication date of *The Trepasiers* is 1943, not 1945; the last sentence of the fourth paragraph should read: "As she said in a 1983 interview with Sybil S. Steinberg, 'I take a part of my life and create a whole other creature around it.'" LILITH regrets these errors.

BY TZIPPORAH BEN AVRAHAM

I live in the vibrant, integrated community of Boro Park, Brooklyn. Yet, I am different; I have several disabilities which keep me from mainstreaming into the larger society.

I have been blind for four years, I have multiple sclerosis and asthma, and use a wheelchair. I was divorced after I went blind (my husband left me). I work for a politician as his handicap specialist, and am presently a graduate student in political science.

I have met barriers in the Jewish community which I feel are insurmountable. The barriers are simple to remove: ramps or elevators can assist in eliminating barriers for my wheelchair. Yet nobody thinks of these things.

Let me speak of doors. I often want to go through certain doors in my community. Yet many places put stumbling blocks in front of me. A flight of stairs to a person in a wheelchair is almost as huge as a mountain. For all purposes, it might as well be a mountain. Restaurants, clothing stores, doctor's offices, and schools are all but closed to me. Many social service agencies are located in places with stairs. I sit and wonder why I am locked out.

The doors which hurt the most are the doors to the synagogue. I cannot get into them if there are stairs. Often the women's gallery in an Orthodox *shul* is upstairs. Even if I could get into the *shul*, there would be no Braille *siddur* (prayerbook) for me to use.

Blind and in a wheelchair, I find the place of greatest comfort, my synagogue, is closed, cold to my burning desire to be in there. I am "puter" (exempted from public prayer). But I do not feel I should be nor do I want to be.

I go home and cry a lot. I *daven* (pray) in solitude. My home's walls have become my own Wailing Wall. Yet in my own home, I draw to me the strength of my religion, which has survived. Maybe some of the strength of my faith will give me strength.

When I received my *get* (Jewish legal divorce papers), my blindness was considered enough justification. I could not ask for a *get*, even though my husband beat me severely. But because I was blind, it was justification for the divorce if he asked for it. It made me wonder if the bias against the Jewish



disabled is Talmudically ordained...with a prejudice against the woman with a disability.

Then it occurred to me: I am now in a wheelchair. What if I were married and had to go to *mikvah* (ritual immersion facility)? There is not one *mikvah* I know of with a ramp or hoist lift. There are no grabber bars or hand-held showers. There are also no bathchairs. Even if I did remarry, I would not be able to go to *mikvah*.

I know other women with disabilities. None of them are ever vocal on accessibility issues. Do wheelchair-using women in the *frum* (observant) community give up *mikvah*? Does anyone care?

The pervasive attitude is one of an empty void. I see nobody rushing to fill it.

Bikur Cholim (societies for visiting the sick) give hit-and-run help for medical conditions. This denigrates the disabled person to a medical model.

Maybe nobody has thought of these things. Perhaps the issue is to let it be known that these things are needed: ramps, Braille, elevators, accessible homes, stores and schools.

For the deaf, we need TTY's to call the local meat market for an order or ask a question over the phone.

For the mother with a disabled child, we need yeshivas for the child and an affordable house to live in with no barriers. Where are these things in the community?

I often think...if a rose lost one petal, would it be any less a rose? If a Jew has a disability, is he or she any less a Jew? □

Tzipporah BenAvraham was a contributor to With the Power of Each Breath: A Disabled Woman's Anthology (Clies Press, 1985).

THE EDITORS THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR
THEIR GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Bernyce Adler, Emily Adler, Joan Alexander, Toby Ticktin Back, Sue Barnett, Dr. Sema Bayla, Gail Beitman, Mae Berkman, Gertrude Bernhardt, Helene Bernstein, Marjorie Blankstein, Gay S. Block, Paula Blum, Helen Blumenthal, Wendy Borodkin, Deborah Boxerman, Sherry I Brandt-Rauf, Marilyn Braveman, Miriam Breau, Harry Brod, Sarah Fine Bronstein, Marcia Burnam, Linda Chalfin, Marcia Chamowitz, Leona Chanin, Aphrodite Clamar, Mary Cohart, Rachel Cowan, Irene Dash, Annette Daum, Ida Davidoff, Katherine Davis-Rosenbaum, Sarah De Ris, Nancy Dudwick, Sylvia Eckman, Siddy N. Eiferman, Iris Engleson, Helen Eveland, Mary Felstiner, Deborah Fuller-Hahn, Joyce Gang, Eileen Garnett, Judith Glass, Michelle Gluck, Nancy Golob, B. Golumb, Barbara Gomberg, Shirley Gould, Yvette Gralla, Blu Greenberg, Drs. Martin and Doris Greenberg, Roslyn Griesbach, Susan Haas, HEA Synagogue Charity Fund, Esther Altshull Helfgott, Janet Heller, Lora Heller, Sondra Henry, Marilynne Herbert, Annette Hollander, Margaret Hunegs, Francia Isakoff, Karen Jaffe, Sondra Kaplan, Sonya Kaplan, Madeleine Kaufman, Francine Klagsbrun, Celia R. Klein, Peter Knobel, Edith Kostroff, Barbara Kramer, Raquel G. Kramer, Corrine Krause, Alma Lasher, Sarah Lederman, Anne Lapidus Lerner, Joan Seif Levi, Marilyn Levine, Norma V. Levitt, Sharon Lieberman, Betty & Sidney Lieberman Philanthropic Fund, Lynn Liss, Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, Sheila Litzky, Melynda Lopin, Elaine Lynn, Mary Meigs, Betty Milgram, Linda Minkes, Jean Nalibow, Dianne Newman, Norma Papish, Natalie Pelavin, Joy Pincus, Beverly Post, Sally Priesand, Ilene S. Prokup, Louise Rachel, Elka Raedish, Adelyn Raich, Esther Leah Ritz Family Philanthropic Fund, Lilly Rivlin, Mallory Robinson, Molly Roche, Reuben Rose, Suzanne Rosen, Paul C. Rosenblatt, Lucille Roussin, Estelle K. Rubin, Frances C. Salten, Regina Morantz Sanchez, Bernice Sandler, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Lila Satenstein, Dianne Saxe, Sonya Schappes, Vivian Scheinmann, Clara G. Schiffer, Susan Schnur, Peninnah Schram, S. Ruth Schulman, Myrna Schultz, Ruth Seidman, Maxine Seller, Suzan Kraemer Sever, Phoebe Sharaf, Ruth Sherman, Sandra Shifrin, G. Shiner, Marion Shulevitz, Robin Siegal, Harriette Siegel, Rachel Siegel, Lisa Slater, Andrea Smith, Laura Smith, Marcia Spiegel, Sheila Stanger, Joanna W. Stark, Elaine Starkman, Ann Stein, Gayla Stein, Jennifer W. Stein, Anita Steiner, Judith Stern Peck, Carol Stollar, Betty Stone, Barbara Strongin, Emily W. Sunstein, Barbara Sussman, Sarah Swartz, Sher L. Sweet, Edith Teibloom, Rose Vainstein, Ruth Warshauer, Denise Weinberg, J. Pamela Weiner, Bernard Weingarten, Dorothy Weinstein, Eleanor Weintraub, Ann Weiss, Mildred Weissman, Ina Winston, Leah and Herbert Zarge, Shoshana Zonderman.

Finally the answer* to
the question Jewish
women are asking
across the English-
speaking world:



HOW CAN I SUBSCRIBE TO LILITH

**By filling out this form
and returning it with your
payment right now.*

4 issues only \$14 8 issues \$26 (save \$2) 12 issues \$35 (save \$7)

(Institutions, schools, libraries . \$20, \$35, \$50) TOTAL \$ _____

The cost of subscriptions does not reflect the real cost of producing
the magazine. Please add 20% of your total as a tax-deductible
contribution. \$ _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Outside U.S. add \$4 per 4 issues and remit by international check or
money order in U.S. funds.

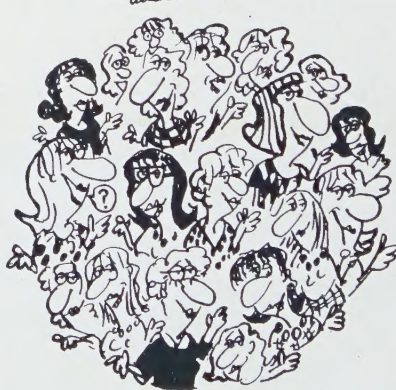
Please make checks payable to **LILITH**

Lilith
Suite 1328
250 West 57 Street
New York, NY 10019

Name _____

Address _____

Zip Code _____



THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

Lilith

250 West 57th Street, #1328
New York, N.Y. 10019

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, N.Y.
PERMIT No. 8491